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AMERICA AND THE AMERICANS

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FROM A FRENCH POINT OF VIEW

LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1897

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TO ——

It may seem strange to the readers of some of these pages that I dedicate this little book to you, an American—the loveliest, the truest, the most competent of women, worthy to wear a coronet in any country, needing none in your own. I lay my prejudices as a Frenchman at your feet. Were all your countrywomen like you, there could be no happier land than this.

PREFACE

At the suggestion of two of my American friends I have permitted these hasty notes to be translated for publication. In spite, however, of entreaty on their part, I have declined to make the author of them known. It is enough that a Frenchman, one of whose ancestors was a close friend of Lafayette, and who has enjoyed on two occasions the hospitality and welcome of many Americans, writes them. There is no malice—there can be none—since when they were written there was no thought of their publication; and there is naught but kindness intended, since there was naught but kindness received during my two visits to the great American republic. If anonymity

has its disadvantages, it has, too, its distinct advantages, for it can make me no enemies and lose me no friends, and leaves me in that state of calm neutrality which is without prejudice aud without partiality. If I am discovered, it will be only by those who have admitted me, a stranger, to an intimacy which, as a friend, I should be the last to violate; and of what touches them I could, in spite of myself, only write the most agreeable things.

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I

Liverpool to New York

WHEN I left Paris for a second voyage to the United States, my sister made me promise to supplement my letters to her by keeping a diary that should be delivered to her for perusal on my return. Though I may be permitted to call myself a much-travelled man for one of my years, having been to the university in Germany, and for a winter in Rome, for a year in Switzerland, and for several shorter journeys to Russia, Turkey, Holland, and England, I had never been requested before to give anything in the way of a detailed account of my journeys.

Why I write.

But with the United States it was different. A charming American Secretary of Legation had told my no less charming sister that she much resembled the beautiful Madam R., of New York. Strange to

say, a succeeding friendship with both the above-mentioned Secretary and his wife led us to the discovery that a certain distant relative of Lafayette, who accompanied him on his second voyage to the New World, saw and was conquered by a beautiful American whom he met at Newport, and afterward married. Hence it turned out that the beautiful Madam R. is in sooth a relative—very distant—of our family.

American relatives.

This accounts for my sister's anxiety to hear more in detail of my impressions, first of Madam R. (alas! for the vanity of women), and then of America and the Americans.

As I had affairs of importance to attend to in England, I went first to England and sailed from Liverpool to New York on one of Her Majesty's White Star line of steamers. But one travels, I should think, under English auspices only when one cannot travel protected by a French *chef*, and made comfortable by French attendance. I am no Anglophobist, but the English cannot make coffee, so that a Frenchman has no breakfast; they cannot dress salad,

hence no luncheon; they cannot make soup, hence an ill-regulated dinner. As one lives but to eat at sea, this is a serious defect; and though Crêcy, Agincourt, and Waterloo are suggestive arguments in favor of English meat and drink, even to a Frenchman, still they have failed to convince me in favor of a breakfast for a gladiator, a luncheon for a bull-dog, and dinner for a digestive apparatus run by electricity. *English gastronomy.*

It was a disappointment to me on looking over the passenger-list to find that most of my fellow-travellers were not Americans, but Germans, or so, at least, such names as Arnheim, Bethel, Blumberger, Salzberg, and others led me to suppose. But I was soon to discover my mistake. In spite of the fact that even I spoke better English than most of the other frequenters of the smoking-room, I was told by a young gentleman from Boston that all these people with the strange German names were Americans. He told me also to take a tram-car ride down Broadway, on my arrival in New York, to see for myself to what a dolorous extent that great city had become

Semiticized. These loud-talking, pool-selling, pool-buying, story-telling denizens of the smoking-room, who spoke broken English, were, as he had affirmed, Americans.

One of the large retail shops in New York, the shop which, without equal courtesy and business-like methods, attempts to do for New York what the Bon Marché does for Paris, and Whiteley's for London, is in the hands of the Jews. These people are, said my young friend, the banker, from Boston, the Chinese of our retail trade. And surely one has only to read the signs from one end of Broadway to the other to be made acquainted with the fact that the Mosaic despoiling of the Egyptians goes on with renewed vigor in New York to-day.

"Jerusalem the Golden."

The famous New York café, The Delmonicos, is a veritable synagogue at the dinner-hour, for these mongrel Americans are not *personæ gratæ* at the clubs, and are driven to congregate in restaurants. One of the avenues running parallel to the Fifth Avenue is almost given over to them as a place of residence, and I was told that

it is a favorite amusement of certain idle young gentlemen to ride in the horse-cars on this particular avenue, and to make bets as to the percentage of their fellow-passengers who between any two given streets will have straight noses. One of the best-known monthly magazines is in their hands; the minor and least attractive legal business of the city is theirs to such an extent that reputable practitioners have more than once threatened to take proceedings against their disreputable methods, and the newspaper of the largest circulation, and of the most unsavory reputation, in New York, is also owned by a Jew. They are so numerous, and control so much money and so many votes, and fight for one another so unscrupulously, that no one criticises or attacks them openly, though on all hands one hears sneers, innuendoes, and dislike expressed. My only opportunity for judging of their good or bad qualities was what I saw and heard in the smoking-room during the voyage. For one meets them socially nowhere —at the clubs, in society, or elsewhere.

Clannishness.

Of the score or more whom I could study

at leisure on the steamer, whether they were typical or not, I do not know. They were theatrically American, however; much given to a constant display of cheap patriotism, which led one to surmise that they were themselves a little self-conscious about it, and, like all pretence, theirs revealed itself in awkwardness and exaggeration. I was told later by an ex-politician that the cheap retail business, whether commercial, theatrical, legal, or journalistic, was largely in the hands of these people. On one occasion they attempted, in the name of the Germans of New York, to foist a statue—and it was said a poor one—of Heine upon their good-humored step-brothers, the native Americans, but this was too severe a test of their influence, and the statue was declined. As a foreigner it struck me as being supremely ridiculous that the statue of a foreigner, however eminent, which had been refused by three cities of his native land, should even be suggested as appropriate in America. But as we shall see—or, rather, as I shall say—all through these pages, the good-humor of

Cheap patriotism.

"Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten!"

the Americans is their greatest virtue, and their most appalling vice.

If these people were not fair types of the American, there was a young lady on board the steamer who was, I was informed, typical of a large class of boarding-house, summer-hotel Americans. She was of that wiry, thin, convex-back and concave-chest development that one sees frequently in the country towns of America. She had bright eyes, a tireless tongue, and a frank independence of manner, which would have been suspicious in a Frenchwoman, awkward in an Englishwoman, and impossible in a German *Backfisch*, though in her own case it was apparently natural enough. In twenty-four hours she knew every unattached man on board the ship, and had walked and chatted with most of them, including myself. She was protected or abetted in her promiscuous independence by her father, who saw her only at meal-hours in calm weather, when he was able to be about. She lounged about in steamer-chairs with this one and that, and was often on deck alone with one man or another when

An American girl.

all the other female passengers had retired. She was only about twenty years of age, but her innocence, or her experience, or her temperament, seemed a sufficient safeguard for her. To me she was merely a curiosity, but my friend from Boston sniffed at her from afar, remarking that she represented one of the pests of American civilization, one of those divorce-breeding, and divorce-excusing, women who are bad without vice, and good by the grace of God.

A morose view of her.

Later, during a tour of the American summer-resorts with an American friend, the son of one of New York's ex-mayors, I saw numbers of this class of young women. It is not surprising that neither Frenchmen nor Englishmen understand them, for in France only a woman who is less innocent, and in England only a woman who is more innocent, could play this rôle. But here such an one is, strange to say, neither *cocotte* nor coquette. She aims neither at your pocket nor at your heart. She permits every liberty, but no license, and owes her existence to the reckless carelessness and good-humor of the American parent,

Difficulty of this rôle.

and to a certain climatic influence which makes for sexlessness. For it is, indeed, true that, with the exception of the Southern States, there is a steady falling off in the birth-rate among those who are of American parentage on both sides, for two or more generations back; so I was told, at least, by the polite and intelligent gentleman who is at the head of the Department of Statistics.

Temperament a safeguard.

This curious phase of the native American's physical temperament, and, coupled with it, a certain strained religious sentiment, make possible these promiscuous improprieties, which here result harmlessly, but which in any other country would certainly entail social disasters.

Nowhere have I seen or heard this point discussed—namely, the influence of the climate upon the procreative powers. It may well be that this terrible climate, with its ninety-eight, ninety-nine, and one hundred degrees in the shade in summer; and in some parts as much as forty, and even more, below the zero point in winter, may have an unlooked-for effect upon the

Changes in national characteristics.

increase of population. When the tremendous immigration of foreigners lessens, and the population, as a whole, has spent half a century in this nervous atmosphere, there may be, to the amazement of the statisticians, a sudden cessation of the present enormous yearly increase of population.

In the South, where the factor of immigration plays a less prominent part, already the negroes are increasing at a ratio of more than two to one faster than the whites. New York is no longer Dutch, though only one hundred years ago half the signs in William Street were in Dutch, and up to 1764 no sermon in English had been preached in any of the three Dutch churches.

Delaware is no longer Scandinavian and Norwegian; New England is no longer Old England, or New England, but French-Canadian and Irish, and not long ago Boston itself had an Irish Catholic as its mayor. Whether this is the result of the enormous immigration — the increase in population during the ten years, 1880–90, was 12,466,467—or owing, in part at least,

to the growing sterility of the native-born Americans, is a matter that concerns ethnical students, and which gains nothing from its discussion by a mere curious traveller like me.

Our scientific historian, Taine, would attribute the taciturnity and moodiness of the men also to the climate. In two centuries the Puritans, the Cavaliers, the Huguenots, and the Dutch, have grown quite away from the temperament of the parent stocks. The American is voluble enough, on occasion, as is the American Indian, but the salient traits of the Americans today are their changeful moods. All hope one day, all discouragement the next. Taciturn and frowning, and then talkative and nervously jolly. Some of the men who have lived for a long time in the West are already very like the Indians in disposition; and even in the East a serene equableness of disposition is far more rare than among the men of Europe. Climate, environment, call it what you will, I merely note the fact, leaving it to the more studious to explain.

Effects of the climate

II

First Impressions of New York

EVERYTHING depends upon one's point of view. To judge New York — its politics, its social life, the manners and cultivation of its people — from the level of Paris or London or Amsterdam or Rome, is to come to one's task with the eyes out of focus.

The point of view.

One hundred years ago the population of Philadelphia was 32,205, the population of Boston was 14,640, and New York was a small Dutch town at the mouth of the Hudson with a population of 24,500. Scarcely a street was paved; street-lamps were sometimes lighted and sometimes not; at the hour when fashionable dinners begin now, all festivities and gayeties were over then, and the cry of the watchman, "Nine o'clock and all's well," was heard; John Jacob Astor, whose descendants now give

you dinners of the most luxurious description, had just landed in New York with his stock of violins; theatres were tabooed as immoral; there was no national coinage, and even so late as fifty years ago the small money consisted mainly of foreign coins; there were no public libraries and no reading-rooms; there was less mail-matter distributed then in a year by all the thirteen States than is now distributed in one day from the New York Post-office; a man who had been to Europe was pointed out in the streets as a celebrity; the total population of the nation then, it is estimated, was about two and a half millions, now it is seventy millions; the annual cost of carrying on the whole government was then $5,500,000; in 1895 the disbursements for pensions alone were $139,807,337, paid to almost a million different persons.

A century's progress.

These and many more facts of like import should be in possession of the traveller when he begins his sight-seeing in New York. Then the newness of it all; the vulgarity of much that one sees; the lack of repose; the thousand and one details

Incompleteness explained.

left unattended to; the sudden fluctuations in the social and financial world; the lack of courtesy among all the servants, public and private, and the lack of good manners among many of the masters; the entire disregard of personal liberty and of individual rights; the strenuous efforts on all hands and by everybody *de vouloir tout régler, excepté eux-mêmes*, which may be said to be a national characteristic—these features of this civilization, and much else besides, are judged differently if you bear in mind their own past, and do not attempt to measure them by the thousand years of Paris or London, Venice or Rome.

New York harbor.

For the first glimpses of the city, as you sail into its glorious harbor, no excuses are needed. Some of the buildings are so high that they look like attempts of Jack, of the bean-stalk fame, to build a step-ladder to Heaven. The hard glaring light of the sun brings out sharply the outlines of the hundreds of colossal buildings standing where one hundred years ago the first Roosevelt had his tanneries, and the Lispenard meadows were a favorite resort of

sportsmen, and land was sold by the acre which is now leased by the square foot. It affronts the imagination. Nowhere else in the world has the giant of material progress worn such huge seven-league boots. This is impossible in the life of little more than one generation of men, you say, as you stand on the deck of your steamer, but in another half hour you are disillusioned.

Disillusions.

You land on a rough wooden wharf; you are tumbled about and tumbled over by men who speak in the brogue of Ireland and the guttural of the *Vaterland;* wagons and men and horses are tangled in an inextricable mass outside the rough shed; you are bundled into an ill-smelling carriage with torn upholstery, which creaks and groans as it is bumped along over the wretched pavements, drawn by two *Rosinantes* in a tattered harness, and driven by an Irishman who throws aside his cigar only after he has driven a block or two, and whose costume is made up from the wreckage of a bankrupt livery-stable and a pawn-shop. You are charged fifteen francs for your drive of, perhaps, two miles, and

Hibernia on the box.

one franc extra for each piece of luggage, and though you pay peaceably through the nose, your coachman expectorates as he gets back on his carriage, with never a word of thanks, or a touch of the hat.

Then it is that you say, "Ah, no, this is not a miracle, this is still a frontier settlement!"

But, alas! for one's impressions. You are ushered to the rooms engaged for you by your friend in Washington at a hotel in Fifth Avenue. It has been done by telegraph, but in a moment the wharf and the hurly-burly and the expectorating Hibernian are forgotten. There are flowers on the table, there is a bath-room done in tiles, there are soft carpets, beautiful rugs, tasteful furniture, and the *Figaro*, *Revue des deux Mondes*, and *Le Petit Journal*, cut and on your table. The hot water pours into the tub in a torrent, the soap and towels are of the best, and the breakfast, of fruit, fish, eggs, and coffee, which follows soon after the bath, is served in costly porcelain. I am the guest of my friend here until the day after

Compensations.

to-morrow, which is the earliest moment he can get away from Washington.

I am a Frenchman, I am economical, I look no gift-horse in the mouth, but I cannot refrain from wondering what this all costs. We met this young man, my sister and I, in Paris, through the introduction of my friend the attaché. His father, an ex-mayor of the city, is, they say, a very rich man—why or how I know not, but *lucri bonus est odor ex re qualibet*—as only these American nabobs are rich in these days—rich in cash—not in low-rent paying lands, like the English, or in small-interest bearing *rentes*, like my poor compatriots. *American wealth.*

He stayed with us in the country, and was my guest at my poor apartment in Paris, but we gave him nothing like unto this.

I begin to regret my anger at the wharf, my annoyance at the bumping-machine in which I was conveyed thence, my annihilating astonishment at the coachman's fare. Surely, I say to myself, that momentary discomfort was not a feature, but an accident, of this civilization. *Apologies for first impressions.*

I begged to be let alone to-day and to-morrow, therefore I dine alone in the evening down-stairs, at a small table, in a large dining-room. There are many people about in all sorts of costumes. At one table are two gentlemen; one of them has a sandy chin-whisker which protrudes almost at right angles from his chin; he and his friend have beefsteak, ice-cream, and champagne for their dinner. Not a dozen yards away is a party of four, two gentlemen and two ladies, the ladies *décolleté* to the point of embarrassment, and with jewels on hands and neck, and in their hair. What exaggeration, I think to myself. The gentleman of the aggressive chin-whisker only needs spurs and a sombrero to be of the prairies; while the ladies only need a little rouge, and as much off the length of their skirts as they have taken off their shoulders, to be of the erstwhile *Mabille*.

Types.

Extremes.

But I doubt my own impressions now, and therefore I make no generalizations of New York's manners, customs, and costumes, from these people, who may not be

Americans at all. As for me, my own dinner is of the most excellent, *et rien ne doit déranger l'honnête homme qui dîne.*

The next morning, having the day to myself, I remember me of the advice of the young banker from Boston. From my hotel to Broadway is not far. At the corner of the street I determine to mount one of the swift-passing tram-cars. They rush by me, one after the other, bells clanging, and silhouette figures swaying about inside. I hold up my hand in vain. As I am beginning to wonder whether they are all express-trains, a kindly stranger touches my arm and says: "You're on the wrong corner, my friend. They only stop on the farther corner, and if you don't want your arms jerked out, you'd better mount the animal where he proposes to stop!" I turn to bow my thanks, but my stranger takes two or three steps and a jump away from me, grasps the platform of a passing car, and as he fades away in the distance, I see him gesticulating to me to move down to the lower corner.

An electrical broncho.

He was right. I move down a few steps,

and the next car stops in front of me with a rumble and a grating noise, which I afterward learn is made by an endless cable under the street, which is the motive power of all these rushing, clanging caravans. My particular car is crowded inside and outside. Each time it stops, you are hurled forward and then back. People bending to sit down as the car starts, place their posteriors anywhere but where they intended, and not infrequently in a space already occupied by another. The conductor and the passengers come and go, over your feet, jamming your legs meanwhile; women at the far end of the car make signs at the conductor to stop, in vain, and finally elbow and shove themselves to the door, hurtling against other passengers, and flung now and then into the arms of those sitting down, as the car stops, or starts, suddenly.

Eccentricities of the beast.

Not far from where I got on, the conductor shouts something into the car, and of a sudden we veer around a curve at a prodigious rate of speed, and one lady who had been clinging to a strap in front of me

What New-Yorkers call a "cuyrve."

is whirled round, still holding to the strap, and knocks her neighbor's newspaper into his face, and dislocates his hat with the same movement; while two men who had been standing in the door-way are shot into the car as from a catapult, where they are stopped short by those clinging to straps in the passage-way.

A study in acrobatics.

At last I get a seat, and the drama that goes on about me interests me so much that I continue my ride as far as Wall Street, forgetting all about my intention to read the signs along the route.

These tram-cars seem to be gymnasiums on wheels. The alertness of eye, and nervous, strained look of the thin faces and wiry frames about me, are in some sort explained. Both men and women must be sharply and constantly watchful if they are to survive a daily pilgrimage, or, better, a daily crusade in these vehicles. A second's inattention, a moment's respite from the dangling leather, which hangs from the roof, and you are shot into somebody's back, bosom, or belly, or sent sprawling your length over the knees of

two or three of the seated passengers. There is little bodily harm done, but there is an ever-recurring succession of shocks to the dignity and to the nerves.

American imperturbability.

The most remarkable thing about it all is, that no one seems disturbed or greatly put out by this involuntary riot which takes place every few seconds.

These cars are owned by companies which in return for the valuable franchise of the use of the principal streets in the city, promise good transportation facilities at a cheap rate. They do it in the higgledy-piggledy fashion above described.

What we should think of it in Europe.

In France such infringement of the rights of the people to personal comfort and personal dignity, if persisted in, would result in revolution; and in London one day of it would fill the next day's newspapers with indignant protests, and in a week's time the matter would be under the control of the police.

But in this strange republic these good-natured people are slaves to every conceivable form of political and financial jobbery, and no one protests. It may be the

land of freedom, but it certainly is not the land of freemen. Personal comfort, personal privacy, the right to go and come, and to live as one prefers, without comment, and even without newspaper notoriety, are as impossible as in Russia, or in Armenia. Each one is so taken up with his own and somebody's business other than his own, that he has no time, and no vigor, left to defend what in every other civilized country are deemed to be the most precious personal prerogatives.

Protests unpopular.

"Why does no one protest?" I say to one American after another. It is useless, they tell me. The protestor is unpopular here. There are too many people interested to keep the people slaves, to permit anyone to express dissent. The newspapers tar and feather such a one with abusive and vituperative rhetoric, his friends laugh at him, and all those who are acquainted with him hint broadly that he is of an irritable, testy disposition. He is told that he had better take up his residence in one of the "effete monarchies of Europe," where such things are better reg-

ulated. The result is, that while Europe ships her gallows birds, paupers, and incompetents here, and the commercial coyotes of all nations swarm in, to oust the natives from their rightful gains, representatives of three or four of the wealthiest families and many others of minor social and financial repute, are living more and more months of each year in Europe, and some of them live there altogether. It is said that a hundred million dollars, and more, are spent in Europe every year by Americans, who, as the years go by, go more often, stay longer, and spend more. If wealth, privacy, personal comfort, and personal liberty are not protected here, those who wish to possess them in security will infallibly go elsewhere. Sharp and quick-witted as the Yankee is reputed to be, he has not seen yet even the mere commercial disadvantages of permitting his native land to be ruled by the rough, to the extinction and the ultimate exclusion of the gentle.

Why so much American money is spent in Europe.

Thus are my impressions first gained, and then rudely contradicted. It seems

impossible to reconcile such experiences as those of the landing in New York and the journey in the tram-car with the elegant comfort and convenience of the hotel. The one set of experiences, all rough, raw, and lawless; the others dominated by efficiency and method.

But one sees at last the solution of this problem of contradictions. And the solution is, namely, that everything requiring nicety of mechanical means, everything that can be done by steam or electricity, or gas, or by harnessing the powers of nature, is done well, sometimes superlatively well; while anything demanding personal service, or the training, discipline, and courtesy of men and women acting as servants, in either a high or low capacity, is done meanly, carelessly, irresponsibly, and without any sense of honorable allegiance to a master.

Machinery and personal service.

Here again it is forgotten, not only by the foreigner, but by the native American as well, that it is only just a hundred years ago that it was with the utmost difficulty that New York State was persuaded

The point of view again.

to join in the ratification and acceptance of the Constitution. The people feared that by so doing they would lose something of their independence. This spirit is still rampant to-day, and nowhere more noticeably so than among the ignorant foreign element, who, escaping from the tyranny of their own incompetency at home, make pretence of demanding a personal liberty here, which results only in lawlessness and license.

This is a new country. Land is plenty and cheap. I am assured that no industrious, sober, and honest man need lack the necessaries and even some of the luxuries of life. But, in spite of this, it is estimated that 3,000,000 persons are supported in whole or in part each year, and at a cost to somebody of 250,000,000 francs for maintenance, and 250,000,000 francs in loss of productive power. In this great State of New York alone, the cost of dependent, defective, and delinquent persons is over 60,000,000 francs per annum.

Strange prevalence of poverty.

I go to bed thinking that civilization by machinery is not an assured success. But

who knows! In this country of anomalies and contradictions, I may go to bed a week hence convinced that I am wrong.

At any rate, here is an interesting experiment in government and in social life. There are no slaves, and in the European sense—except in half a dozen of the larger seaboard cities—no servants. Every man here is striving to be his own master, and consequently most of them must be their own servants.

Incipient socialism.

In the Eastern part of the country they are already struggling with the illogical problem: How can your political equal be your social or domestic inferior? If all deserve the same comforts and the same respect, who is to black the boots and wash the dishes? Discontent ripens fast in this atmosphere, and no wonder! During every succeeding political contest each man is crowned. Between the political contests the crowns are hung up behind the door, but the sight of them makes men wish to wear them all the time. An effusive reception awaits the political prestidigitator who promises to juggle all the hewers of

The hoodwinked voters.

wood and carriers of water into perpetual crown-wearers! Alas for the republic when such a trickster appears! He will probably be voted down the first time, but he will inevitably reappear.

III

Social Side of New York

TO-DAY my New York friend arrives from Washington. He has written of his plans for me for the next few days. They include luncheons, dinners, the opera, and three dances. Verily, they entertain *au galop*, these good Americans.

First I lunch with him at a club on Fifth Avenue. He tells me it is mostly frequented by the younger set of men, and I meet half a dozen of them. It is the fashion now, he tells me, to be rather aggressively American here. I am not made aware of this, however, by their conversation. Perhaps they suit their after-luncheon-cigarette chat to what they deem to be my taste rather than theirs. Certainly they are profusely hospitable, and altogether at my service, and among the most agreeable is a brother-in-law of Madam

Some young New-Yorkers

R., whom, he tells me, I shall meet to-night at the opera.

The conversation is much that of idle men all over the world. I remark upon this cosmopolitanism to my friend, who hints rather broadly that this apparent detachment of mind is assumed for my benefit, and thereupon describes some of the men more in detail. One is the editor of a magazine which is much given to articles by English noblemen, but a very good magazine withal, two or three numbers of which I have since read. Another is in a large banking-house downtown, and comes up to luncheon at the request of my friend.

and their ancestors.

Still another is the son of a man who twenty-five years ago was an unknown lawyer in a Western country town; to-day he is the confidential attorney of several great financiers, and his son is an amiable idler. Another married a daughter of one of the two great millionnaire households here, and spends her money with eccentric lavishness. Another is the grandson of a Scotch weaver who introduced a process of carpet-making that has built up one of the great-

est businesses in New York. Another is the son of a Western man who made millions by the invention and exploitation of a machine for cutting wheat. The father of another discovered a process for coating pills, and his family mounts the golden stair of social prominence pellet by pellet.

I cannot understand how it is that certain American critics sneer at this, and love to point out the grandfatherlessness of New York's social life. To me it is as a dream, as an incitement to ambition, as a magnificent social panorama gilded by the commercial prowess of vigorous men.

The charm of being one's own ancestor.

As we leave the club one of these young men points across the way, and, as he says "good-by," tells us he is going for a shave. The phrase, "going for a shave," catches my ear; I am soon enlightened. These correct and well-dressed young men, many of them, are shaved each day by a public barber. Some days later I go to the same shop to have my hair cut, and there I see rows of small porcelain cups with the names of their owners in gilt letters upon them. Some of the names are

"Going for a shave."

those of men whom I have already met. Young gentlemen come in, take off their collars and neck-cloths, and their faces are daubed with soap and rubbed by the hands of the barber and shaved. They are then wiped off with a towel, powdered, and, without any further ablutions on their part, they go thence to make love, or to kiss their wives or their children, for all I know. This seems to me horribly dirty, and painfully disagreeable. Many men, I am told, never complete their toilet at home in the morning, but are shaved down-town each morning. Their faces are pawed and patted and powdered by a negro, a German, or an Italian, and so left for the day.

My preoccupation at dinner.

As I sit at dinner in the evening at the table of the weaver's son, I cannot forbear wondering how many of the gentlemen present were shaved by Germans, how many by Irishmen, how many by Italians, and so on.

The dinner is a very sumptuous affair, with flowers in profusion—indeed flowers are bought and sold and seen here as in

no other city in the world, the roses are more beautiful than any I have ever seen elsewhere, and cost, I am told, at certain seasons of the year, fabulous prices.

We are to go from dinner to the opera, hence the ladies are in gala costumes. The hostess actually wears a crown of diamonds on her head, and though none of the others wears so conspicuous an ornament, still the display of jewels is imposing. But the crown keeps catching my eyes, dazzling them and my understanding at the same time. "Who is this lady? Is she a foreigner?" I ask of my friend as soon as we are alone. No, I learn that she is far from being a foreign aristocrat. Indeed it is only within the last ten years that she has been known, even in New York's more exclusive circle. She married a rich man, who has grown richer in trade, and she has, by natural diplomacy and by not stickling at the quality of some of the attention shown her, risen to her present position. She is certainly very charming, and her affairs are not my business, though from the stories that are offered me about

An American coronet.

her at intervals during my stay, her affairs seem to have been the business of a good many.

Leanings towards aristocracy.

Though this is a republic, though I read in the papers each morning abusive tirades on English ways and English customs and English noblemen, I recall that after Washington was made President, there was immediately a long and wordy wrangle in the new congress in regard to the title he was to bear.

Evidently some of these rather boastful republicans still hunger for the flesh-pots of the titled Egyptians. In one of the large jeweller's shops there is a special department of Heraldry, if you please, where these republicans have coats-of-arms put together for them.

At the door of the opera-house, on coming out, I see scores of liveried men-servants, some of them with cockades in their hats, and on harnesses and carriage-doors, verily, I see crests and coats-of-arms, some of them too big even for real noblemen. Pray, Mrs. Sharp, Mrs. Green, Mrs. White, Mrs. Black, Mrs. Jones,—pray, where did

Thefts from the Herald's office.

your right to the coronet, the crest, and the coat-of-arms come in? Do you even know what the various symbols, signs, and figures mean? I have my doubts, truly!

Manufacture of stars and garters.

It is surely an American idea that pellets, or carpets, or furs, or ready-made clothing, or reaping-machines, or dry-goods, or patent medicines, or tea, or sugar, or hides, or railroad bonds, carried to the *n*th power, confer patents of nobility on their possessors or their legatees. But how else can these people have any right to them? And why, oh, why, do they want them at all?

And there are titles, too, yes, titles galore, among these boastful republicans. At the little luncheon-party one young man was invariably addressed as "General," and another, who lives on his wife's money and other people's ideas, was called "Colonel." They had been on somebody's staff, I was told in explanation.

Punctiliousness as to titles.

Even the newspapers are punctilious in their bestowal of titles. "The Hon. Patrick Divver" did this, "ex-Attorney-General So-and-so" did that; "President Jones" said this, "ex-Secretary of the In-

terior" said that; "Colonel J." and "General H." and "Governor X.' ' and "His Excellency the Governor of M." and "ex-Boss C." and "Doctor Y."—all clergymen are given the degree of Doctor of Divinity, I notice—and "Professor N." have arrived at such and such an hotel.

High falutin nomenclature.

Then these good plain people have societies without number. There are Officers of the Legion of Honor, Comrades of the Grand Army, Sons of the Revolution, Knights of Pythias, Daughters of the Revolution, Colonial Dames, Societies of the Dutch, Societies of New England, the Southern Society, and how many more I know not. Then each of these has its ribbon or its button or its badge, and in no country in Europe do you hear so many titles, or see so many insignia worn.

Secret love of titles.

This is all very pretty fooling, and harmless enough were it frank and outspoken. But it is not. These same people toady to foreign noblemen as do no other people in the world. Politically they are loud, blatant even, in the reiteration of their republicanism; but socially they are tuft-hunters,

not to say flunkeys of the most pronounced type. I am a Frenchman, one of my ancestors was beheaded in the revolution, but I am a republican. Locked away in our poor, tumbled-down *château* are ribbons, crosses, buttons, and swords won and worn by men who bore my name when the great Louis, who could not write his own name, was putting the first wedge in, that was at last to tumble the monarchy to the ground. The young friend with whom I have just been lunching will tell you as much. But *Dieu m'en garde* from all this sham aristocracy, from all this frippery and foppery of nobility in a republic.

Faded glory.

Some of the titles bestowed upon different officers of these organizations I have mentioned, out-do even the ascriptions to the Almighty by a negro preacher at a camp-meeting. And worse yet. Do we, some of us, of older nations laugh at the rudeness and awkwardness of democratic manners? What then is to be said of these people in the East who laugh and sneer at the unsophisticated manners of their own brethren who dwell west of the Mississippi and the

Ungenerous criticism.

Rocky Mountains? Certain Western men came on to New York, while I was there, to start a Western Mining Exchange. The local newspapers made fun of the costumes of their wives and sisters, gave exaggerated illustrations of the costumes of the men, and were positively hilarious over their simple luncheon, their awkward manners, and their inelegant diction.

French politeness.

If the Paris press treated a party of tourists from Lyons or Marseilles in this fashion, well-bred Frenchmen would stare and stammer, in amazement and disgust, when they opened their newspapers. Fancy putting the wives and sisters of your own countrymen, from another part of the country, into the pillory of newspaper caricature! These same editors, too, offer their columns as rewards to those who can lift them and their wives into the social swim. They pay this one, and that, for articles, and in return expect to be invited to dinners and drawing-rooms!

American chivalry to women.

I had heard much of the American chivalry to women—of how they could walk the streets and travel alone. Let us be frank

and say that it is all nonsense! The newspapers make free with the names of ladies, and drag wives and mothers and sisters into the shambles of every political controversy, every social *contretemps*. While among the better classes, in their clubs and drawing-rooms, one hears hints, scandals, innuendoes, and stories—and most of them about the ladies in their own circle—such as would prepare the way for a dozen duels a week in my own country.

The most shamelessly shocking periodical that it has ever been my misfortune to read, is published in New York each week. It devotes itself openly to the libellous and the licentious. The names of "society" people are to be found in almost every paragraph, and the most prurient details of every known, or suspected, scandal are blazed forth to the world in its pages. Our most suggestive pictorial French papers, highly seasoned and colored though they be, are as the Gospels to Rabelais, when compared with this sheet—wherein jokes about ladies' underclothing, with the ladies'

Ribald gossip.

names printed in full, are sometimes a feature of its lascivious ribaldry — and yet nobody is shot! There are societies for the prevention of cruelty to children, for the prevention of cruelty to animals, for the prohibition of intemperance, for the relief of the poor, for the prevention of the sale of obscene literature—societies, indeed, without number, for the amusement of the rich at the expense of the poor, but no men and women strong enough to prevent this hebdomadal debauch of every body's morals who has ten cents to spend.

One society lacking.

All these political and social and moral contradictions and anomalies are amusing to me, but if I be not mistaken they portend dire results in the near future to this confident, and not infrequently arrogant, republic. I could wish it were otherwise. Every Frenchman wishes it were otherwise. For "*on aime quelqu'un toujours contre quelqu'un*," and no country in Europe would be so directly affected by the failure of republican manners and institutions here as we should be. For the anti-republican countries all about us, Germany, England,

A Frenchman's view of it.

Austria, and Italy, would point a moral and adorn a tale, for the benefit of republican France, should republican institutions founder and fail in America.

IV

Public and Private Functions

WE were going to the opera, when I forgot the opera in remembering other things. Once there, it is a brilliant scene. In these matters, as in their fine buildings and their sumptuous hotels, this nation has caught up in the race with Europe. Music, scenery, and singing are of the best, and the audience, if anything, is even more gorgeously gowned and bejewelled than in Paris or London, and far more so than at a similar affair in poor bankrupt Rome, or even in St. Petersburg. If the precious stones and laces are what they look to be, these Americans must spend fortunes upon their women.

The opera.

Madam R. is not in her box until late, but at last I am presented to her. She laughs good-naturedly at dear Fifine's anxiety to have a description of her, and bids

me come to see her out of town, somewhere on the Hudson River, where she has her home. She hopes that if I am to describe her, I am not intending to publish my diary-notes. I reply that I am incapable of writing a book, even though I wished to do so. She tells me that Bourget's book was of small value, because most of his impressions seem to have been filtered through a Boston and Newport filter before they were printed. "And, you know," she adds, "Boston is no longer America!"

Bourget.

I stroll about downstairs, and, among other things, I notice that each programme has on it a numbered list of private boxes, and opposite the numbers the names of the occupants. As each box in the house is plainly numbered on the printed plan, this makes it possible for everyone with a programme to identify the people in the boxes.

I understand less and less this practically universal desire to exploit one's self, to reveal one's identity even at the opera, to have one's name in the papers, to have one's likeness published. Whether it be the

Self advertising.

levelling-down process in a democracy which makes everyone eager in consequence to boost his head and shoulders up over the average line, or the lack of social confidence and security in people who have no well-defined classes, so that each one feels it incumbent upon him to assert himself always, and everywhere, I am not sure; but whatever be the cause of this evident love of publicity, the result is very *bourgeois* indeed.

Privacy and publicity.

In every civilization of any age, it is the desire of pretty much everybody to shield his life and that of his family, and to live part of the time, at least, quite on one side of the roar of the business, social, and political torrent. A small house away from the crowd is more highly esteemed than a large house in the crowd. In short, only those who cannot avoid it live all the time in the ruck of people.

But it is quite different here. The population of the great cities increases enormously every year. I was told by a well-known worker at the social problems of New York the figures which give the pro-

portion of the people of New York City who live in hotels, boarding-houses, and tenements, and one is amazed at the number. From these figures—I regret not having them here in Paris, but as I jotted down notes from day to day in America, I had not the smallest intention of using them in this way—I remember that it appeared that only a very small percentage of the people live in separate dwelling-houses. Even people whose incomes permit it, prefer to live in hotels rather than in small houses of their own in the suburbs.

Boarding-houses and hotels.

This is a sure sign of a superficial people, and of a thin culture, for it is the mark of the uncultivated to be uneasy and discontented away from the crowd, just as it is the mark of a more happy breeding to be discontented, if one is forced by circumstances to be forever in it.

This straining to make one's self conspicuous is apparent not only in the numerous likenesses and the columns of personal paragraphs in the newspapers, but it is evinced by the startling extravagance of dress not only in public places, but in the

Newspaper notoriety.

shops and on the streets. Velvets, furs, laces, jewels, may be seen on the streets and in the tram-cars, morning, noon, and night of every day. The ladies whom I saw at the opera in all the brilliancy of court costumes are to be met with—they or their sisters of less social distinction—on the streets in costumes which, if less brilliant as to color, are no less costly as to texture and variety of fabric.

Extravagance of dress.

It has been my good fortune to know the streets of Rome, Paris, London, St. Petersburg, Amsterdam, and Vienna, but there is nothing approaching to the display of fine raiment there that one sees in New York. What would my French friends think of a lady walking to and from church in a costume composed entirely of fur—jacket and skirt as well; of another in velvet, draped profusely with lace, and a bonnet of jet with pink and white plumes, and, were I a *modiste*, I could enumerate many more which struck my unaccustomed eye as being equally extravagant and in equally bad taste.

When I pointed out to two Americans, with whom I was walking, this ostentatious

finery worn by so many women on the streets, I asked to what class they belonged, and how they lived at home. They told me that a fair proportion of them were Jewesses, and that many more of them were people who lived in boarding-houses and hotels, and others, people who lived on a very small scale at home, with one, two, or three servants in their households. The sole social recreation of many of them is this parading of the streets, visiting the theatres, and invading the shops.

Lack of comfort at home.

Display abroad.

There is a large middle class here, the men of which are busy from morning till night, and weary when they reach home. They have little social experience, and hence they find even the most elementary social duties irksome; the consequence is that most of their women-folk are left to themselves for social diversion, and they take it in its more barbaric forms only. The dinner-giving and dinner-going, which is so prevalent here among a certain class, is largely confined to that class. This very common form of hospitality, even in the country towns of England, and among our large

middle class in France, is narrowed down to a few, comparatively speaking, here. This is owing to the lack of knowledge in such matters of the great majority, and to the scarcity, and abnormally high wages, of trained, or even untrained, servants.

Social inexperience.

One might live a long time in London, or in Paris, before seeing a guest at a twelve-o'clock wedding in his evening clothes—unless he were a French official appearing in his official capacity, as the President of the Republic at the races for example—but I saw this social *gaucherie* at a wedding here. There is much latent ignorance of this kind, which seldom reveals itself, because its victims take pains to avoid appearing where they know they are on unsafe ground.

Great social aptitude.

This lack of social training and social experience—though there is no lack of social aptitude, for I defy Europe to produce more charming hostesses than half a dozen women I could name here, who I am told had been nowhere, seen nobody, and had nothing, until of a sudden, marriage, or the "ticker" in Wall Street, or an oil-well, or

a mine, landed them at their opportunity with overflowing purses—make even the more common forms of social intercourse comparatively rare, rare indeed to an extent I was unprepared for.

Thousands and thousands of families in even the larger cities of America, having an income amply sufficient, never dress in the evening, never serve wine on their tables, never have a dinner served in courses, *à la Russe*, when by themselves, and never attempt to have their friends to dinner without calling in the men, the means, and the *menu* from a restaurant. This makes life rather arid for the women.

Artificial social life.

But to me the sadder side of it is, what I have noted in other departments of American life, the undemocratic phase of it. These people are not willing to be themselves, to dine out, and to have others to dine, to entertain, and to be entertained, in a manner suitable to their modest means. They live meanly, that they may dress extravagantly on the street, and from time to time entertain on a scale that is utterly unrelated to their everyday life. I know hun-

Lack of social independence.

dreds of *ménages* in France, and some score or more in England and Italy—ah, how often I have been told, sometimes twitted with the remark, that we have no word for "home" in French, until I have been tempted to reply: "Thank Heaven, no such word, and no such place, as is represented by that word here, in many cases" —where one goes home every night to a pleasant little dinner, quite suitable to be served to one or two friends, should they appear, and where the proprietors have less than 30,000 francs a year. I dare affirm that it would be impossible to find a proportionate number here among people of the same income.

Public dinners.

On the other hand, the number of so-called public dinners, where men, in number from twenty-five to five hundred, meet to dine together, and to hear speeches as they smoke and drink afterward, is greater, far greater than anywhere else in the world. The Irish dine; the Germans dine; the English dine; the Scandinavians dine; men from all the States and territories of the Union resident in New York, dine to-

gether; the graduates of all the different colleges dine; the bankers, the brokers, the jewellers, the travelling salesmen, the journalists, the athletic clubs, the Sons of the Revolution and the Fathers of the Rebellion, and even the clergymen, dine in this public fashion.

This style of entertainment is an American institution. It grows out of two conditions. First, the barrenness of much the greater part of the domestic social life; and second, the astonishing and admirable glibness of speech of the Americans as a people.

Public speech.

Some of this speaking I heard through the courtesy of my friend the editor, and I read a great deal of it, for I devoured American newspapers and periodicals during my stay there. When one hears these speeches—it matters little by whom, for they pretty much all speak well—one is a little jealous of a race which seems to be endowed by the gods with a gift so rare; but when one reads them, one is rather sad than jealous. Nine-tenths of them are as sounding brass. They are for the ears —for long ears—not for the mind. A

French politician who should treat his constituents to the quality of oratory that evidently suffices here, would be ridiculed by every journal in France; and in England such an one would be quietly shelved at the instance of his own party leaders.

Gusts of verbosity.

One understands at last how there can be so much speaking here, when the speeches are analyzed, for most of them are mere verbal exercises—mere gusts of verbosity. Not that one wishes to give, or to leave, the impression that there are no good speakers, and no good speaking, among the Americans. That would be altogether false.

When one has enjoyed the friendship, and heard the speech, both private and public, of Mr. James Russell Lowell, one may not say that. Mr. Evarts, too, I heard in Paris on one occasion, and Mr. Joseph Choate and the President of the Harvard University I heard speak in New York, and these men all rank with the very best men of any nation, one might almost say, indeed, of any time. But much of this speaking falls under one and the same head. Like

the paltry social life at home, and the occasional inappropriate display outside; like the meanness of one's personal surroundings, and the exaggerated extravagance of dress in public; so this speaking, much of it, is but an insincere laying claim to what one wishes to appear rather than a modest exhibition of what one is or knows. There is a demagoguery of dress and manners and speech, as well as of political action, and it is here, alas! in this republic, that one finds it in its most disagreeable forms.

The philosophy of it.

No one would belittle the high claims to sustained and brilliant speech of Webster, Clay, Calhoun, of Rufus Choate, Edward Everett, Wendell Phillips, of Beecher, Storrs, Phillips Brooks, and many others. I am not denying that there have been, and are, great orators in this country. But, owing to the Public School system here, no country has, or has had, such an amount of superficial and uncritical culture spread over such an enormous geographical area. This condition of things intellectual makes this the happiest hunting-ground for the

The home of the demagogue.

mountebank, the demagogue, and the various other shapes which verbosity may take.

Minds trained just enough to enjoy gaudy epigrams are easily enslaved and carried away by almost every gust of words that blows. Hence it is a great temptation to be what is called an orator, and orators abound in consequence. They are one of the crops here, like wheat and cotton! There is scarcely a political campaign goes by without the appearance of "Women Orators," "Boy Orators," "Boy Preachers," "Boy Evangelists," and many other varieties of orator, whose silence would be golden indeed. No matter in what department of life a man may succeed, he is called upon to speak, and because he knows about one particular thing, he is called upon to make speeches upon all sorts of subjects utterly unrelated to his specialty. The opportunity to advertise one's self is looked upon as the most valuable reward that a grateful democracy can offer in return for valuable services received.

The oratorical crop.

V

Social Contrasts

LAST night we dined at the house of the representative of one of the wealthiest, perhaps the wealthiest, families of this republic—our host is a woman and a widow. Some twenty or more people were present, and the plate, the porcelain, the glass, the *naperie* were the most magnificent I have ever seen on a private table. Some of the same people were there whom I have met elsewhere, and, in addition, two titled Englishmen, one of whom took the hostess in to dinner, despite the fact that a distinguished American, a member of one of the late administrations, was present.

A smart dinner.

But I am beginning to see that "Yankee Doodle comes to town a-riding on his pony" mainly in the newspapers, certainly not in American drawing-rooms.

It was not a long dinner, but all the

seasons and all points of the compass contributed to the bill-of-fare.

American markets.

I am told, and one need only dine out here, or examine the daily bills-of-fare at the best restaurants to believe it, that New York is the best market in the world. The variety of game, fish, fruit, fresh vegetables, and shell-fish that is evidently procurable here in season and out of season is unequalled.

Some of the guests.

My companion at table was the beautiful lady of the coronet. On the other side of me sat a languid lady who manœuvred the conversation into a confession that she was an authoress. Alas for me! I have forgotten her name, her *nom de guerre* and the titles of her books. Of the other people who attracted my attention, one was a banker, who is also a politician, owner of a racing-stable, and a dog-fancier; another was a clergyman, who also turned out to be an Englishman, though in charge of a large church here; another was the wife of a Western man of mines, and of fabulous wealth, whose origin, I was told, was of the most humble; and two more were the

wife and daughter of a citizen of Chicago, who, having made a fortune there, from behind several hundred yards of dry-goods' counters, gives these ladies the benefit thereof.

Good manners of new people.

But, be it said, no one would have suspected these things of any of the people mentioned—unless it be perhaps of the lady from Chicago—unless one were told by their friends. The men do not unbuckle their revolvers and put them on the table, and the women do not eat with their knives; on the contrary, there is a certain subdued air about it all, as though the participants at these functions were somewhat awed by their grandeur and solemnity.

But even this wears off at the dance to which we all adjourn later.

American dancing.

In a public place, part hall, part restaurant, but handsomely decorated, and adorned with plants and flowers, we danced—or rather they danced—for I soon found myself unacquainted with the mysteries of American dancing. It is different from ours, and different from the English,

and German, also, and I must admit more graceful, though in the early morning there was a good deal of romping.

Vive la France.

Comparisons are always very shaky bridges between one nation and another, and so I will not say that at these affairs they drink more or less than in France, or in England, but they certainly drink a good deal, even the women, and principally of very cold champagne. It is the dry, brilliant, sparkling wine, which is much like the climate here. May they continue to love it, and we be spared the phylloxera to make it for them.

I bade my dinner-hostess good-night, and also several other hostesses, who, it appears, are the official hostesses of the ball, good-night as well, and returned to my friend's apartments. To-morrow I go with him to his father's house in the country, and from there to spend the Sunday at a large club in the country which he has described to me, and which I shall soon see for myself.

A home in the country.

We spend the Friday afternoon and night at the country-place of my friend's father. It is a beautiful, wild country all

about us, and the first really quiet and well-regulated abode away from the crowd that I have visited. Here again is a contradiction of my impressions, for the household and all its appurtenances, the roads and the quiet of the woods, bespeak the choice of a cultured mind. All this is a thousand years in advance of the landing-stage, the tram-car, and the profusely dressed ladies of the New York streets.

On the following day we go to spend the Sunday at a club which turns out to be unique in my experience as a traveller. Several thousand acres of beautiful woods, with a chain of crystal lakes in the centre, and beautifully kept roads around the lakes and through the woods, and the hill-sides dotted here and there, within this immense enclosure, with the cottages, villas, châteaux, and colonial mansions of the members, and in the centre of it all a large and well-furnished club-house.

American ingenuity in the country.

The instigator of this great social enterprise is an American who made his own fortune. There are fishing, boating, and out-of-door sports, both in summer and

winter. There are some seventy houses here, owned and built by different people, who, I understand, buy the land on which they build of the club corporation, of which the projector is the permanent president. The whole great park is policed and lighted and generally cared for by the club. We get ourselves comfortably settled at the club-house, where there are rooms for guests, and then by telephone my friend calls up horses, and with two others we go for a drive upon the broad, smooth roads. These roads are the best I have seen anywhere in America, and equal to those that Napoleon built for us, which are the best in the world.

A reminiscence of Dickens.

As we are driving I tell my friends of how, when driving in Central Park, New York, I saw a groom on the back of a cart driven by two ladies, who not only chewed tobacco but squirted the juice on the road behind him. "Now," I remark, "if I should tell of such an incident, I should be called an exaggerator and a detractor of the country!" "Ah," they replied, "you would give the impression by relating such

Servants' manners.

an incident that it is typical, while as a matter of fact none of us has ever seen anything of the kind."

I cannot help thinking of this incident, however, as an illustration of what I see and hear in this country on all sides of me. It is a fairy-land of contrasts. One moment you are tumbled through streets full of ruts and holes, the next moment you are ushered into the seclusion of as luxuriously appointed an hotel as is to be found in the wide world; in the morning you spend half an hour in a torture-chamber, shot along on an endless chain and filled with tumbling human beings; in the evening you dine off gold plate, and drink out of crystal vessels; as you walk up the streets you are accosted by a shivering, ragged, hollow-cheeked mortal, who claims that he has no place to sleep, and has had nothing to eat; in another moment you are in a palace, and from scores of boxes women lean forth, with the price of thousands of good dinners on their arms, shoulders, and in their hair. You are driving in comfort over well-kept roads, in a magnificent park,

Contrasts.

Street sprinkling by tobacco.

and the groom of the fashionably dressed lady driving in front of you squirts tobacco-juice under the noses of your horses.

There are thousands of men and women without work and without money in New York, and yet to get trained servants is a problem so difficult of solution, that many people, I am told, have given up in despair and sought refuge in hotels and apartment-houses.

Disproportionate wages.

Read some of these figures, my economical compatriots, and be satisfied to stay at home. A good cook, female, is paid from one hundred to one hundred and seventy-five francs a month, and in large establishments much more, and, of course, has her board and lodging besides. Waitresses, laundresses, chamber-maids receive from seventy-five to one hundred and twenty-five francs; coachmen, from two hundred to as much as three hundred and seventy-five francs; grooms and gardeners, from one hundred and twenty-five to two hundred and fifty; and in-door men-servants—there are comparatively few of these—from one hundred and twenty-five to two hun-

dred and fifty francs, and more, a month. For these wages you get, mostly, only a mechanical, uninterested, and impersonal service—at least so I am told by the Americans themselves, for of course my small experience in such matters is worthless; although in a large establishment at Newport, where there must have been at least ten servants, my clothes were neither folded nor brushed, and my patent-leather evening shoes were returned to me nicely blacked instead of polished the morning after I had put them out.

Indifferent service.

Women, and men as well, seek positions in swarms where they are paid less than good servants are paid. The trained nurses in the State hospitals, for example, do not receive as much in wages as the chambermaids in well-to-do families—being different from the private trained nurses, who charge exorbitantly; the thousands of shop and factory girls have longer hours, must board and lodge themselves, and yet receive smaller wages.

Dislike of domestic service.

One hears complaints in England, and in France, and sometimes in Italy—more

especially among the foreigners wintering there—on this same point, but in those countries it is an incidental and occasional problem; but here it is a permanent and vexatious factor which embroils and makes difficult all attempts at a well-ordered and peaceful domestic life.

High wages and personal happiness.

And, after all, what is the outcome of these high wages? Do the servants here soon graduate into an independent life as the result of their savings? Not at all! They save less, I am told, than in France and England. They send large sums, in the aggregate, to their relatives in foreign lands, they spend more on dress and amusement, and they retire as proprietors of small inns, hotels, or farms of their own, far less often.

Hundreds of the better class of servants, who are tempted to come here by the high rate of wages, soon discover that greater expenses accompany the higher wages, and in the end the result is about the same, and they return home. There are not so many well-regulated and responsible homes here requiring well-trained servants, and there are fewer masters and mistresses accus-

Inexperienced mistresses.

tomed to the care of, and the responsibility for, servants.

It is only in the South that they have had servants for two centuries. In every house that I have been in, I have taken pains to ask my host if any of his servants indoors or out are the children of former servants of his, or of his family, and never have I received an answer in the affirmative. *Domestic service not a profession here.*

I recall that when it was proposed to put in uniform the men who clean the streets in New York, there was a series of jibes and jeers and sneers. And this in a republic! This in a land where, at least, one would suppose that every form of honest toil would be honored, or, at least, respected. Believe it not, ye toilers in other lands who look with longing eyes toward this land of the free. No monarchy, no empire in Europe, so exaggerates the value of success, financial success especially, and so degrades the drudgery of commonplace labor as do the people of this nation. *Undemocratic view of labor.*

In England the Queen pays her own way on every railway journey she takes; in

France the President of the Republic does the same and only a limited number of men who are, strictly speaking, officials, travel free; but here there are hundreds of rich men connected with railways, steam-boats, express or telegraph companies, who have passes and who travel free, send their packages free, their telegrams free, and are accorded privileges that no sovereign in Europe would dream of demanding for himself.

Great privileges of wealth.

The rich tax the poor here by special legislation and by a certain freemasonry among themselves, much as the powerful used to tax the poor in my own country, by sheer force of arms. This is one reason why personal service of any kind is so difficult to procure, because personal service and menial labor, while studiously applauded politically, are universally undervalued socially. These people get higher wages here, but they save no more, and they have far less consideration shown them, and they have less amusement and less comfort, and, pray, what is the ultimate value of higher wages—"higher wages," how often

it has been dinned into my ears, almost as often in fact as the statement that we have no word for "home" in French—if there results not more consideration, more comfort, more leisure? Money is not as valuable as water in a desert. High wages are useless if you cannot buy consideration, rational amusement, and a competency for old age with them. For the lower classes this country seems in some sort to be a desert, socially, where they are thirsty for just the cold water of their happier, though perhaps less apparently prosperous, life at home. "Why, you know, sir," said an English groom to me here, "a dollar honly buys what a shillin' does at 'ome, sir, and the masters take no interest in hour amusements as they does at 'ome!"

No well-defined position of the servant class.

VI

Conflicting Evidence

MY two days at the great park in the country were of the most pleasant. At this time of the year many people from New York go there to spend the Saturday and Sunday.

A relic of Puritanism.

In New York City one cannot "go for a shave" after one o'clock on Sunday, and all the shops, including the restaurants, cafés, and saloons, are closed by law, so far as the sale of anything potable is considered. But an hour's ride from New York, in almost any direction, are numerous country clubs which, in the last ten years, have become very popular, and where one may indulge in out-of-door sports to the heart's content. At Newport, too, I found people playing tennis and golf on the Sunday. But no poor man can take his wife and children to a beer-garden, or drive or walk into

the country to sup, and have a glass of beer or wine.

When our Bernhardt was here, there was much discussion as to whether she was a proper person to be received, and ladies who gave her receptions, gave it out that no unmarried girls were to be invited to meet her! This aspersion of the character of the married girls was passed over without any chuckling or laughter, and yet these Americans often speak of the national talent for seeing, and making jokes. *Bernhardt.*

Poor Guilbert received much gratuitous advertising because she appeared once or twice in private before a select number of the "leaders of New York Society." And yet the newspapers who assailed both her and the ladies who went to hear her, publish Sunday editions replete with illustrations and paragraphs concerning criminals of high and low degree. *Guilbert.*

When the statue of the Greek Slave was exhibited in Cincinnati, a delegation of clergymen was sent to view it, that they might make a report to their presumably

less expert fellow-citizens as to the propriety of going to see it.

Chaste Diana.

An undraped statue of Diana on the top of the Madison Square Garden in New York caused much criticism on the score of its indecency; and yet at several of the public balls, one of which I attended for an hour or two, women appeared in costumes, and behaved in a manner, that made my youthful memories of the Mabille seem sombre and saltless.

So far as my own experience goes, it has seemed to me that much of the immorality here among the upper classes is rather mental than physical. The intercourse between men and women is very free, or so it appeared to me; but the worst feature of it is the stories and slanders that they themselves circulate about one another.

Hypocrisy or self-deception.

A certain unconscious hypocrisy is prevalent among the people of all classes. An instance of this is the constant reference one hears—I suppose for the benefit of the poorer classes—to the immense cost of the standing armies in France, in Germany, and in Italy, and how men are obliged to

serve in them at an immense loss to agriculture and commerce. But place the figures of the cost to France of her army alongside of these figures, my French friends:

Pensions.

In the year 1880 the United States paid 250,802 pensioners the sum of 53,240,540 francs.

In the year 1885 the United States paid 345,125 pensioners the sum of 328,468,535 francs.

In the year 1890 the United States paid 537,944 pensioners the sum of 542,469,450 francs.

In the year 1895 the United States paid 970,524 pensioners the sum of 699,036,685 francs.

Less than thirty thousand persons short of a million, in this total population of sixty-seven millions, receive pensions, and these pensions constitute a drain on the national exchequer each year of 699,036,685 francs. If one deducts the negroes and the foreign population settled here since the war, who of course receive no pensions, it is easy to see that almost one out of every forty-five or fifty of all the inhabitants is paid a bounty by the State. This sum paid out in pensions each year is almost one-half of the total value of the exports

from the United States to the United Kingdom of Great Britain in one year, and Great Britain is by far their largest customer, and is more than one-eighth of the sum of the total domestic exports for the year. As a colossal piece of political extravagance, this surpasses anything ever dreamed of in the history of nations up to this time.

National extravagance.

While the Democratic party robs New York City, the Republican party robs New York State, and some of the above-mentioned pensioners rob the United States, the people in Cincinnati are trying to determine whether they are too good to look at the Greek Slave, and the citizens of New York are blushing with shame at the sight of Sarah Bernhardt in respectable drawing-rooms. And these are the people who gave us Mark Twain, Artemus Ward, and Oliver Wendell Holmes! Pray, what has become of the national sense of humor?

Lacking in economy.

The nation, like so many of the individuals composing it, has grown rich with startling rapidity, but they do not know how to take care of, or how to use, their money.

Economy, the touchstone of all the arts of civilization, is an unknown quantity here.

Said a distinguished American publisher to me: "The people in New York whom I pity are not the poor, not the laboring men, and the small people on small incomes; but those who have incomes ranging from four to seven thousand dollars a year." There is no place for them in this great city, it appears. Rents are too high, the wages of servants are too high, fuel, food, and clothing are too high, to permit them to live with such surroundings and such comforts as their incomes ought to give them. Certain social, intellectual, and charitable demands are made upon them that no one thinks of making upon the poor, and they are put to it to keep their heads above water in consequence.

Small incomes in Europe.

This is not true of Paris, it is certainly not true of Berlin, of Brussels, of Rome, or of Amsterdam, and I doubt if it be true of London. It is assuredly a curious comment upon a democracy, that in its greatest city only the dwellers in the two extremes,

tenements and palaces, live in comfortable financial security.

This is a country of extremes and contrasts; no traveller, I fancy, would gainsay that. Everything that they take up here is exaggerated. In Paris one sees many women wearing no skirts at all when riding their bicycles. Here, in the upper part of New York, and in the parks, at Newport, Saratoga, and other places, one sees many women who wear skirts, but skirts of just that degree of shortness which makes their wearers more conspicuous than if they wore no skirts at all. It is the difference between the bare legs of an Italian fisherwoman, or a Swiss washerwoman, and the black-stockinged and gartered legs of the vaudeville stage, or the lubricous poster. This whole matter is subjective, not objective. It is a question of the imagination. It is not what is seen, but what is suggested that plays havoc with decency.

The seen and the suggested.

It may be the climate, which is highly exciting, or this newly made wealth, or the desire to surpass others, but whatever the cause,

there is a tendency to carry to extremes such customs as they adopt. The ladies and gentlemen one sees at the various summer-resorts are very attractive to the eye, but the masculinity of the garments worn by the women, and the effeminacy of the costumes of some of the men, make the scene appear, somehow, not quite natural. It was rather as if a number of people were taking part in a play given out of doors.

First-rate sportsmen.

The men here are good sportsmen for all that. There are probably more good shots with rifle, shot-gun, and revolver within the boundaries of this republic than in any other country in the world. American horses have won at the best races in France and in England. At France and England's own game of court-tennis an American is *facile princeps*, and in track athletics and in yachting they have only lately given fresh proof of their superiority. The records for the high jump, and the broad jump, for hurdle racing, and the half mile, and mile flat race, and I believe all the records for skating and bicycle racing are held by Americans. They have no equals

at all these out-of-door sports, unless it be the English, and even their equality is stoutly denied here.

But even in their sports it seems to be less love of sport than love of personal distinction and display that actuates the majority. They play not for the mental and physical refreshment so much, as for the excitement of surpassing someone else.

Time and time again have I remarked upon the fact that it is a rare thing to find, even in the country, people walking for the mere pleasure of gentle, unexciting exercise. All over France, Germany, and England you see people by the hundred, on any free day, walking in the country roads, lanes, and by-paths. Here, no such inconspicuous, unexciting exercise is popular. There seems to be a certain feverishness of rivalry even in the way they take their exercise.

Sport at the universities.

One of the results of this is an endless series of dissensions, quarrels, and discussions, not among the professionals alone, but among the young gentlemen of the universities and the athletic clubs. Indeed the game of foot-ball was played at

last, among these young gentleman, with so much bad temper, with so many personal encounters, and with such ceaseless accusations of cheating, foul play, and bad faith, against one another, that it was seriously proposed to stop the intercollegiate games altogether.

All this is of course disgraceful, and for it there is no excuse whatever, unless it be that these so-called young gentlemen are not gentlemen at all.

There seems to be a lack of the comparative, and of the intermediate, of any sense of the value of the mean between extremes in everything.

Superlatives.

The newspapers banish the comparative, and use only superlatives. Men are either "rich" or "poor;" speeches are "eloquent," and speakers are "orators;" firemen and policemen are "heroes;" shops have "splendid" or "magnificent" displays in their windows; unknown country clergymen pay "touching tributes" to deceased parishioners; shopkeepers in provincial towns are "wealthy merchants;" men of wealth who die almost always leave

"several millions"—generally it is "ten millions;" actors and actresses and public speakers "receive ovations;" Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Brown, and Mrs. Robinson receive their guests "attired in lovely creations," and "wearing the well-known" Jones, Brown, or Robinson "jewels;" lawyers make "masterly pleas;" doctors receive "enormous fees;" the sale of a popular book "runs up into the tens of thousands;" of the newspapers that have "the largest circulation in the world" there is no end; and the "smashing of records" that goes on in this land of superlatives in every department of life, especially in the Weather Bureau, which "smashes" at least one "record" a day every day in the year, must keep the poor statisticians very busy.

"Smashing records."

This is all of a kind, with the furious race for wealth, and the striving for victory at any price, which in the one case interferes with the quiet and comfort of domestic life, and in the other breeds constant discord in many of their athletic competitions. Success is not very

closely scrutinized, but failure is given little quarter.

Though I have been treated everywhere, and by everybody, with courtesy, and often with prodigal hospitality, one phase of my character, I have often noticed, is looked upon with disapproval, and sometimes with something akin to contempt, and that is my contentment! Why do I not speculate, why do I not invest in this or that? Nobody can understand here that a man can really have enough! There must be either a vein of duplicity, or a streak of insanity in a man of forty-five who is willing to live on his income, to serve on the various committees of his little country town, to look after the village school, to superintend the repairing of the roads, and to see to it that his farm-buildings are in order and his few tenants comfortable and happy. I am asked why I do not run for office, why I do not start a newspaper, if I have bought shares in African gold mines, why I do not build tenement-houses, why, in short, I do not try to make myself famous or enormously rich!

Horror of contentment.

Puzzled by moderation.

Apparently it is scarcely reputable to be contented. I dare not reply that to be conspicuous politically, or to be prominent socially, or to be very rich, here, in this land of freedom, seems to me to be about the most awkward thing that can happen to a man, who has not the hide of a rhinoceros; but if I did so reply, that would be my honest conclusions of the whole matter.

The handicap of wealth.

The rich man in America carries the weight of all his wealth as a handicap in any political race. In any other country in the world it would help him, because the constituency to which he would appeal would consider that his wealth was a mark of success and a sign of ability. But let an Astor or a Vanderbilt or a Rockefeller or a Belmont run for office here, or let him even be appointed to office by the President, and there is a chorus of envy, jealousy, and malicious criticism. They are all struggling for wealth, and they certainly toady to some extent to men who have great wealth, but, on the other hand, they seem to take a peculiar, and, to me,

incomprehensible delight in preventing rich men from exercising their abilities in public and diplomatic office.

In the case of one candidate for the presidency, a photograph of his rather large house in Washington was used throughout the West and South as a campaign document against him. One may say, with the approval of every astute politician in America, that the nomination and election of a millionnaire to the office of President of the United States would be absolutely impossible. To call a newspaper a rich men's newspaper, or a prominent railroad official a rich men's servant, or a great corporation lawyer a rich men's counsel, is enough to discredit him in certain sections of the country.

Wealth and politics.

Ninety years ago the founder of the Astor fortune was a poor boy in the streets of New York; fifty years ago the founder of the Gould fortune was an unknown surveyor; twenty years ago the Vanderbilts were not known in New York society; the Belmonts came to New York in the thirties, and the Standard Oil fortunes are all in the

possession of men whose fathers were unknown in financial circles twenty-five years ago. Why then be jealous of men and women whose money is new enough to suit the most stringent American test? Would that I were able to answer my own question! This hot haste to get rich, and this fierce envy of those who are rich presents an ethical problem too subtle for solution by me. In France and Germany and England and Italy we can understand the men who have no wish for great wealth for themselves or for others, and who declaim against wealth as a wrong; but it is difficult to understand men who cry out for more money, more silver, more paper, more anything that will buy things, and then turn upon those who have money to revile them! They are infants in matters of economics, these good people; nothing else can explain their attitude.

Unaccountable jealousy.

European Socialists different.

VII

On Being Busy

UNTIL one has been in this country some months, and has seen at close quarters the methods of the business and professional men, it is impossible to picture to one's self the almost fanatical use of all sorts of mechanical contrivances for the saving of labor, and, as I am inclined to believe, for the wasting of time.

The apotheosis of the type-writer.

On the train going to Boston I noticed one gentleman who had with him a youth with a type-writing machine. During almost the whole time we were in the train he was dashing off what appeared to be an enormous correspondence. While I was not engaged in conversation with my two Boston friends, I watched his proceedings with interest.

Some of the letters were very short, not more than a dozen lines, others were, no

doubt, much longer. The process was about as follows: A letter was taken up and read through by the gentleman. Then a sheet of paper was put into the machine, adjusted and re-adjusted, and the secretary proceeded to play on his keys, lifting the machine every now and then to look at what he had written, while the gentleman dictated. Twice his dictation was not to his satisfaction, the sheet in the machine was taken out, and a fresh one substituted, and the letter re-written. The letter once written, the secretary read it over, then the master read it over, usually made some corrections, and finally signed it. Then an envelope was put into the machine, an address printed on it, the envelope taken out, the letter picked up and put into the envelope, the envelope sealed, and the task for that letter was done.

Time and labor wasted.

The whole attention of two men was devoted to the one letter, and the time consumed, the machine-power used, and the expense of the labor required, were out of all proportion to what was accomplished. An accomplished secretary with such a

bundle of letters, and a few notes on each by his master, could have disposed of this correspondence in one-third to one-half the time, while occupying the time and attention of one, instead of two, men.

Where the type-writer is out of place.

In every office of any importance one finds a type-writer. They are used in writing letters of every description, and often letters demanding, by all the laws of courtesy, a reply in the hand of the master or his secretary. In many cases the manipulator of the type-writing machine is also a shorthand writer. When this is the case, letters and communications of all kinds are dictated to the shorthand writer, who then retires and prints them off on his machine, brings them back to be read over and signed, and then puts them in their envelopes, and addresses them.

No one denies that in a great office there is a mass of matter that can be turned off quickly and properly by the use of these machines. But there is a mania for their use here, and it is considered "business-like" and suggestive of tremendous and rushing employment on the part of the

user to employ them on all occasions. The telephone, too, jingles its summons in every office and in every house, and the amusing side of it all is, that men most devoted to these devices for saving time, will waste time every day in ways that no busy Frenchman, German, or Englishman would permit for a moment.

Stealing time.

In offices furnished with all the labor-saving machines that this most ingenious people have devised, men come to sit down, and chat and smoke by the half-hour. Often the office-door opens to admit the intruder directly into the presence of this supposedly busy man. He cannot escape, and his time is consumed by the half-hourful by friends and acquaintances who have nothing better to do.

Haste and waste.

Men who rush off from a hasty breakfast to board an express train, to be whirled to their telephone and type-writer, often employ a good proportion of time, when in the city, doing small errands, and in visiting, and being visited by other business men, who have also rushed into the city at the rate of a mile a minute, carry-

ing an undigested breakfast in their stomachs, which they try vainly to soothe with a cigar consumed in a smoke-reeking "smoking-car."

It is considered symbolic of success to "have no time!" While the very test of true success is, of course, to prove yourself master of time; for if one is the slave of time, he is perforce the slave to the thousand-and-one devils that haste has in its train.

Business methods.

I have done business in Paris, in London, and in New York, and to a small extent in Berlin, but I refrain from giving my own opinion, though I may quote two Americans on this subject. One is a New York banker, the other a New York lawyer. The first told me that he could do more business in London, or in Berlin, in half an hour, than he could do in New York in two hours; and the other, the lawyer, said the same of London, with the difference that he made the ratio a half-hour to one hour. Letters, the lawyer said, were answered more promptly, engagements were kept more punctually, and busy men

refused absolutely to have their fixed hours for work disturbed or interfered with.

The Americans have far more mechanical devices, and make more use of them, than any other people, but these cannot compensate for the lack of trained, and faithful, personal service.

I may not mention the name of my distinguished friend, a French banker in Paris, but the political, social, and strictly professional work that, with the aid of two secretaries, he turns off every day between the hours of ten and three—just five hours—it would require a dozen telephones, and as many type-writers, merely to enumerate. No Frenchman, and no Englishman, holding public office, no matter how important, would fail to answer a civil note promptly, and by the hand of a secretary; here, on the contrary, one receives notes and letters, even of a personal nature, dictated to a type-writer.

A question of civility.

No amount of machinery can atone for a lack of method, and for the systematization of the business side of life, by imperative and unbreakable rules. Here, there

is a good deal of work of all kinds done at hap-hazard, and the consequent waste of time is enormous.

The critics of all this will not remember how new is everything. I keep forgetting it myself. Fifty years ago Harvard University had only two hundred students; schooling, even of an elementary kind, was difficult to get; libraries and books were scarce; a German—and seventy-five years ago a Greek—text-book was a rarity; educated and cultivated men were few, and even now a trained mind is not essential to political success, or even to the holding of the highest political offices, hence even now the demand for such is comparatively small. *Fifty years ago.*

How can one expect then an army of experienced clerks, hundreds of competent private secretaries, thousands of well-trained servants of every description? It is lack of these that makes a methodical life difficult, and which interferes at every step with a man's getting the very best out of himself, at the smallest cost to himself of worry and waste. *Waste of energy.*

Then, too, besides the scarcity of the higher grades of labor, there is a very general disinclination on the part of even those who can afford it, to pay others for doing what, by any possibility, they can do for themselves. Hence hundreds of men are wasting time and strength, and decreasing their own ability to do their best, by insisting upon expending themselves in doing what others could do as well for them.

English snobbery.

In England—and I may be pardoned if I am prejudiced in my remarks on the subject of America's great-grandmother—there is a pretentious affectation of idleness. To hear many young men talk in England, one would imagine that they never did any work, that none of their ancestors had ever done any, and that none of their friends had any to do. The height of "bad form" is to refer to, or to talk, "shop." This I deem a ridiculous affectation on the part of any class, in a nation of shopkeepers.

American affectation.

In America there is, however, an equally ridiculous affectation of appearing to be busy. In England polite snobbery dic-

tates the question: "How are you amusing yourself?" In America polite snobbery dictates the question: "What are you doing?" Everybody is, out of politeness, supposed to be over head and ears busy. Busy in trade, busy in his profession, busy socially! You are continually hearing both men and women say: "I really must give up some of my engagements; I have no time for anything!" All this is the more ridiculous when one comes to see how very restricted is the variety of social distraction, even in New York—while outside of New York and Washington, the social functions in other cities are not only of a restricted but of a somewhat provincial kind.

Pretence of business.

But it is the fashion to be busy, to be overwhelmed with engagements, to be pressed for time, to be driven to death, in short, by one's terrible social, professional, or business responsibilities. In some cases it is true, but true because the sufferers are incompetent to control their own affairs; but in the great majority of instances it is a huge joke or a seriously assumed affectation.

This hypocrisy, however, brings many evils in its wake. So many people object to being suspected of having any time on their hands, that they will not take recreation openly, even when they can do so as well as not.

Lack of recreation.

A friend here tells me that his physician, who is a recognized authority in the medical world and the author of one or two books, tells him that the great cities of America are the paradise of nervous diseases, and that the use of sedatives is far more prevalent here than in any other country in the world.

A pathological wager.

I have no statistics, and the observation I am about to make may have no warning significance, but one day an acquaintance here, who knew that I was interested in American peculiarities, offered to bet me five dollars each day, for two weeks, that each morning there would be an account of a suicide in the newspapers, and twenty-five dollars that at the end of the two weeks there would have been not less than ten suicides noted. I declined the first bet, but took the second; and lost, for there

were in those fourteen days eleven suicides. This may mean much, or it may mean little, as being merely a coincidence, but it is a fact that I have deemed worthy of jotting down, as it came under my own personal observation, and is not a tale invented for the delectation of the unwary traveller.

American correspondents.

One prime reason why Americans are considered by Europeans to be under-cultivated, is their very general inability to hold any sort of intercourse by correspondence without making blunders — social blunders, and blunders arising from lack of training and education. The most commonplace shades and gradations of difference in one's correspondence with people who occupy different relations to us seem to be totally unfamiliar to many Americans, whose wealth and position would imply in any other country just such knowledge.

Continental gossip.

In Rome, London, and Berlin, more than one unofficial note, from one of the under-secretaries at the American Embassies of these cities, has been passed about as a sample of American ignorance and American bad manners.

Letter from Harvard.

After my visit to Harvard College I received a note about some trifling matter from one of the students there, who is in the highest class, whose education indeed was supposed in a month or two to be finished. In it two words were misspelled, the punctuation was done evidently by accident, and the phrases and the forms of address and closing were such as a French boy ten years old might well have been ashamed of.

On the other hand, I have a large bundle of the most charming and witty notes and letters from Americans. What I am remarking upon is merely that the great mass of people in some sort of society in America do not know how to write either notes or letters, and that many men and women holding prominent positions and possessing large wealth, write you notes and letters unworthy of a first-rate head-gardener or a country shopkeeper.

The type-writer's popularity.

This, I think, is partly the secret of the American love of the type-writer, the telephone, and the telegraph. It not only saves time, as they think at least, but it

also saves an exposure of their own ignorance.

It is a fallacy repeated in each generation, and believed by the superficial of each generation, that personal service will be more and more supplanted by mechanical service; that the steam-locomotive engine will do away with horses and men; that the factory will do away with the hands; that the reaper will banish the laborers; that the type-writer and telephone will banish the pen, and so on. But these inventions come, are welcomed, are used, and still there is a subtle quality in human nature that prevents the banishment of men by machines.

Personal versus mechanical service.

The Americans are a new people, and they like new things, having no prejudice of tradition against them, and they, more easily than other nations, become the victims of this fallacy.

Love of novelties.

The English, dull as they are, have seen the futility of this theory; so, too, have the French, and to an even greater degree have the Germans, while the Japanese are learning it, as they learn everything, with the

instinctive mental quickness of their race. Little England, little Germany, little Japan, train their men rather than their machines, and the commerce of the world, when analyzed, shows the results in spite of the tremendous advantages that this fabulously wealthy — in natural resources — country has.

Methods of commercial rivals.

I prophesy that twenty-five years from this time, machinery will not be used so indiscriminately to take the place of men in this country, and that far more men and women will know how to write their own letters than is now the case.

This is pre-eminently the land of free schools, free education, and free opportunity, but there is a subtle association of ideas needed to give refinement.

There are generations of men and women in Italy, France, Austria, and England, who carry on, and bequeath to others, the intangible laws of good manners. This is lacking here.

On the other hand, there is no lack of willingness to learn or to imitate good models. But the area is so great, prece-

dents are so few, genuine superiority so loath to assert itself, and regarded with such jealousy, even when it is recognized, that people are much at sea for teachers and examples in matters of manners. Hence the stranger is often surprised to find an eminent lawyer, a secretary of legation, a clergyman, a member of the cabinet—these being instances that have come under my personal notice—apparently unable to write a note accepting an invitation to dinner, and ignorant of the proper way to address, and to phrase, a letter to one with whom they are only slightly acquainted. At first one puts it down to boorishness, but the genial reception later, and the hearty good-will of the man, when you meet him, prove conclusively enough that it is merely ignorance of the finer shadings of social intercourse, and nothing worse than that.

Lack of precedents.

The constant and almost universal use of the telephone, the telegraph, and the type-writer, accustom people less and less to the more ceremonious forms of intercourse. The drops of the "oil of glad-

The refinements of social intercourse.

ness" which soften and make smooth the interchange of formalities between man and man, when the pen is ready and the amenities of social life part of one's very being, are not to be found here. They have no time—so they say! They work so hard—so they affirm! Competition is so bitter, "we must hustle," "we must hurry up;" capital phrase that, "hurry up!" and so on with the excuses. Perhaps these statements are true. Who knows! Certainly, I do not, but my grandmother was wont to tell me, alas! all too many years ago, that "*qui s'excuse, s'accuse!*"

VIII

American Politics

DURING my stay in New York I met a number of politicians. One in particular I remember. A man a few years younger than myself, who has already played a prominent part, and who was running over —his enemies say, "slopping over"—with opinions and knowledge of political matters, both new and old. Later, on my journey to Boston, I was introduced on the very steps of the train to two Boston men, both of them holding office, the one in Washington, the other in his own State, and during our five hours' journey together they told me much that was of interest.

A sojourn in Washington.

I must confess, too, that not long ago I was in Washington in a semi-official capacity, for a few weeks, and much that I saw and heard there makes part of my present impressions.

In reading the newspapers—more detailed notes of which I have collected in the latter part of my journal—one notices first of all the out-spoken lawlessness of pretty much everything that deals with political controversy. One would imagine that no single man in political life is either trusted or respected. This method of dealing with one's political opponents is, I found, nothing new.

Personalities of long ago.

A century ago, shortly after Jay's treaty with England was signed, Washington, whose name is now received everywhere with something little short of reverence, was dealt with in much the same, or even in worse, fashion. He was called a "thief," "the American Cæsar," "the step-father of his country," accused of having committed murder, and said to "have the ostentation of an Eastern pashaw." Thomas Paine wrote of him: "As for you, sir, treacherous in private friendship, and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or an impostor." After his retirement from office another

The first presidents.

wrote: "Now will political iniquity cease to be legalized by a name."

Thomas Jefferson was called a "coward" and a "runaway," and his turn for philosophizing was ridiculed when he was pictured—if he should be elected President—as surprised by a foreign minister while "in the act of anatomizing the kidneys and glands of an African, to find out why the negro is black and odoriferous."

Political amenities at the birth of liberty.

Adams was called an "aristocrat," "a monocrat," "an anglomaniac;" was accused of having taken a bribe from the British for his celebrated defence of the British soldiers after the so-called Boston massacre, and was said to be desirous of establishing a monarchy with his sons to succeed him.

Such was the treatment of the first three presidents of the United States. But they were not alone. No one escaped. Jay was burned in effigy. Franklin was called a "rake," and twitted with being the father of illegitimate children, and also with having bequeathed a lot of bad debts to a hospital for a legacy. Hamilton was ac-

cused of almost as many unmentionable crimes as was Napoleon, while Gerry, Marshall, Gallatin, Monroe, Madison, and far too many more to enumerate, suffered intolerable indignities of verbal insult.

The newspapers reap the consequences.

This was then called, and still goes by the name of, the freedom of the press. In defence of this privilege to insult and to injure your enemy, it is said that thereby rascality is exposed, and all underhand dealings made impossible. As a matter of fact, however, the result has been to leave few newspapers in the United States with much power for good, or with much ability to do harm. All their partisan tirades, all their insulting superlatives, all their libellous accusations are read indifferently, and considered merely part of the political game. The newspapers are not bribed, at least not directly, I believe, but most of them have sold their power for either good or evil, by an unrestrained abuse of their privileges.

Even in Massachusetts, Garrison, Phillips, Webster, and Sumner were all of them insulted and humiliated in their own State

and by their own constituents. I presume that there are some bad men in American politics, and no doubt they deserve castigation at the hands of the newspapers; but surely it is a pity that the intelligent foreigner should be led to believe, by the general tone of the public press in this country, that every politician is a rascal.

Is every politician a rascal?

This state of things is due, first, to the intense and widespread envy of success which is noticeable here in all departments of life; and second, to the fact that undoubtedly an ever larger number of men, particularly in the State and federal senates, procure their elections, or are supposed to procure their elections, by the direct use of, or the indirect influence of, their money, or that of their friends. At any rate, it is certainly true that the percentage of rich men in the United States Senate to-day is out of all proportion to the wealth of their constituents.

The federal senators are elected not directly by the people, but indirectly by the State legislatures. The State legislatures are a smaller, and more easily influ-

enced, body than the whole body of electors, and hence, if there be bribery and corruption, it is more conveniently brought to bear at that point.

I expressed some surprise to my fellow-passengers on the journey to Boston, that the constituencies themselves do not prefer to be represented politically by their best men. "Sometimes they do," was the reply, but often the best men refuse to serve. They do not fear abuse and criticism for themselves, but few men can bear to have their wives, and even their children and their servants, surreptitiously photographed and interviewed, and, not infrequently, maligned and insulted.

The better men.

When a man stops to think that his whole family history as far back as it can be traced, that his personal griefs, that his most private domestic relations, that his business and professional concerns, that his intimate friends, will all be made the theme of jest, satire, and caricature, he hesitates before offering himself and all these for such a sacrifice.

Another feature of American politics

which the Americans themselves, with their usual indifferent good-humor, do not recognize, is the rapidly increasing differences between the geographical sections of their enormous territory.

Sectional rivalries.

In days gone by, the principal rivalry was between Massachusetts and Virginia, representing respectively Northern and Southern feeling. Now the rivalry is between the great agricultural States of the middle West and the great manufacturing States of the Northeast; between the silver-producing States of the West and the gold-possessing States of the East; between the States where wealth and comfort and culture are defending their own stability and demanding a solid foundation of conservative finance, and the States, like Texas in the Southwest, and the farming communities in the middle and Northwestern States, where there is little money, and where the population, with little to lose and everything to gain, takes up with the most visionary theories of misunderstood socialism and unsound finance.

It is to be remembered in this connection

that each of these States, no matter how great or how small the population, how rich or how poor in natural or acquired wealth; no matter whether its population is native American, or composed of a majority of negroes, or of lately settled immigrants; no matter whether educated or illiterate, is represented in the federal Senate by two members, no less and no more. And, according to the Constitution, no one of the States can be deprived of equal representation in the Senate with all the others. This is making unequal things equal with a vengeance.

A curiosity of the Constitution.

As an instance of what might happen, there are ten States whose total population is less than that of New York City and its environments alone, and whose total wealth is also much less than that of New York City; and yet they are represented in the United States Senate by twenty votes, while the whole of New York State, which includes New York City, has only two votes. In short, almost one-fourth of the voting power in the United States Senate is in the hands of men who represent a

The consequences.

population smaller than that of New York City. This is already a source of inconvenience, and might well become, I should think, the cause of grievances that could only be settled after a serious disturbance of the machinery of government.

Aside from the spasmodic enthusiasm aroused at intervals by the State and federal elections, there seems to be little interest taken in politics by many Americans.

American and continental interest in politics.

In England you are bored to death in every smoking-room, at every dinner, and at every club, by the political talk, and in France there is a very lively interest, on the part of almost everybody, in politics, while every Italian nowadays is a politician.

Here, I am told, in the large cities, it is almost impossible to get the very class of men to vote who have most at stake in the continuance of good government. Occasionally there is an outburst of indignation on the part of the better classes, and there follows an overturn, but matters soon quiet down again, and the mice come back to play in the public granary.

One never hears of the debauchery of politics in the United States without hearing at the same time many allusions to the Irish, and the solid Irish vote. It may be my ignorance and my inexperience, but having seen something of the Irish politician in his native lair, New York, I am bound to confess that I found him an agreeable fellow.

The Irish vote.

The native, half-humorous, indulgence of success, no matter what its origin, is applied to these politicians. If a man have money, and ability to use its power, great latitude is given to him in matters of personal morality. Sometimes even the ecclesiastical world is suspected of overlooking faults in large contributors, that are condemned mercilessly in the incompetent. The mass of the people get the notion that there is an element of "buncombe" in ethics, as in politics. They are bewildered, it may be, by the example of this or the other rich man of notorious evil life, high in the councils of the church, or in society. The keen desire for, and admiration of, success, and a rather arbitrary ethical code,

combine to make political chicanery easy, and organized opposition to it enormously difficult. Then, too, these politicians have qualities dear to the American heart: they are affable, vulgar, charitable toward the vices of others, and without assumption of virtue themselves.

The record of the Irish during the last war was unsurpassed by that of any of the other foreign nationalities who took part in it. Two Irish lads, it was, who printed and published the first edition of Shakespeare published in this country, and the ancestors of two of the presidents of the United States came from the same village in the north of Ireland.

Pretty much every other political party in this country has been split up and disintegrated by internal dissensions at one time or another, but nobody has ever succeeded in breaking the solid columns of the Irish Democrats. They hate England, but it would be strange if they did not, and that sometimes interferes with the amicable relations that ought to exist between the two countries; but, to be frank, that is be-

The solid Irish vote.

cause the American politicians are sycophants to the Irish vote, and not through any fault of the Irish—and say what one will, their constant and unwavering loyalty to their own party, and their own people, is rather admirable than otherwise.

Whose fault is it?

The Americans are in a large majority everywhere, and if they choose to be ruled, robbed, and misgoverned—as they claim to be—by a minority of Irish voters, one can hardly bestow much sympathy upon them.

The Irish contribution to politics.

It has been said that "*Ce sont les minorités qui gouvernent le monde, et c'est pour cela que le monde a une histoire; si la vraie majorité gouvernait, il ne se passerait jamais rien.*" Certainly there is no lack of exciting political happenings under the rule of this Hibernian minority here, though they cause little rejoicing among the tax-paying sufferers. The making of notable history must be like the American habit of broiling live lobsters—more agreeable to him who enjoys it afterwards than to him who undergoes the operation at the time.

To the traveller who comes here to look on and to note impressions, this bullying of the natives by the vivacious Celts from the Emerald Isle is only another example of the national good-humor and indifference. "Let me make my pile, and you may do what you like with the municipal and the federal government!" seems to be the general sentiment. If the natives can make thousands, they will not bother to punish those who steal hundreds. Call it indifference, good-humor, recklessness, what you will, it is their own doing. They have no right to complain. They deserve to be robbed and bullied and made uncomfortable. Perhaps some day they will arouse themselves from their scramble for wealth, and begin to think of governing themselves. Nowadays, this is merely an autocracy of those who will do the dirty machine-work, not a republic.

Is this in practice a democracy?

IX

A Visit to Boston

WHEN I made it known to my New York friends that I was soon to visit Boston, the advice, suggestions, and comments that I received were very amusing.

Philistine views of Boston.

I was told that as soon as the train crossed the line into New England, I should hear very little English, as almost everybody spoke Latin or Greek; the theatres presented only Greek plays, and nowadays Ibsen's comedies; no smoking and no swearing were permitted in the streets; the ladies wore blue veils and eye-glasses; the men spoke English of the most British description, and wore their sheepskin degrees from Harvard College instead of shirt-fronts; little boys might be seen going through the streets in procession, to present petitions to the Governor that school hours might be lengthened; at the

principal clubs there were debates, three evenings in the week, on metaphysical subjects; several of the churches had women pastors, who wore "bloomers" in the pulpit; at evening parties, after the discussion of a paper read by a Harvard professor, Apollinaris and iced-cream were served, and at very swell houses, "club soda;" New York people only visited Boston when in deep mourning, since no entertainment there made such habiliments seem out of place.

I was warned to express no surprise at the colossal procreative energies of the passengers on the Mayflower when the stupendous number of their descendants was made known to me; and I was advised, that if I wished to be popular in Boston, nothing could serve my purpose better than to mistake Bunker Hill Monument for a monolith, and to sigh over the social frivolity and the intellectual barrenness of New York.

The Mayflower's fecundity.

I believe it to be true, that when any large number of people in any part of the world acquire a reputation for eccentric-

Truth and humor.

ity, even though humor has exaggerated that reputation, there is likely to be truth in the characterization.

At a dinner in New York I had met a wealthy Bostonian and his wife. The day after my arrival in Boston I called upon them, as they had requested, and that same evening I was transferred, bag and baggage, to their very handsome residence. This was on a Thursday, and I am to be their guest until Monday.

Now it may have been a coincidence—at the time I know that I was inclined to suspect that it was a hoax, suggested to my hostess by my friends in New York—but on Saturday morning I was invited by my hostess to go with her to attend a reading from Browning. Until we were actually in the hall, and the reading had begun, I still cherished the hope that it was all a joke. But it was no joke. For an hour and a half a young gentleman, very prettily dressed, and wearing a conspicuous number of finger-rings, read selections from Browning to us. After the reading I was presented to a few of the ladies, and in a

The Browning cult.

guarded way I took pains to find out if the reading was given for charity, or for the relief of anybody. No, these people all attended and paid a fairly high price for tickets, through sheer love of this form of entertainment.

Some of the ladies present had knitting or embroidery with them, and worked steadily during the reading. The young gentleman was not a professor, was not a scholar of high rank, I was informed, but he had visited Mr. Browning in London, and was considered "a very fine interpreter of Browning." I cannot pass any criticism on the young man, for my acquaintance with Browning's poetry is of the slightest, but I have neither added to my Browning library, nor to my acquaintance with his works, since that reading.

"A fine interpreter of Browning."

That morning one lady asked me if I had written anything, or if I gave lectures; nobody ever suspected me of either of these in New York, and I was a little flattered by the inquiry, until my host in the evening told me that every foreigner was asked that question.

I am suspected of literature.

On two other occasions during my short stay I was invited to attend, once an evening lecture, and once another reading, this time from Thucydides, by a young college professor; but as I excused myself on the plea of insufficient acquaintance with the English language to appreciate these forms of entertainment, I have no means of judging of their quality or interest.

I beg off.

On Friday afternoon, however, I attended a concert, or a "rehearsal," I believe it was called, where again the audience was almost wholly composed of women. This, I was told, was a Boston institution—a sort of musical afternoon-tea, where every Friday during the winter months, Boston inspects Boston through its eye-glasses, and, at the same time, makes attestation to itself of its love of culture manifesting itself in musical guise. Let us before all things be fair, and add, that though such a matter may lend itself to the exaggerations of humor on the part of the New York barbarians outside of the modern Athens, it is undoubtedly the most care-

Boston's weekly social rehearsal.

fully planned, and best, musical treat to be had in America. Boston rather prides itself on some of its peculiarities while others laugh, and with some show of reason.

From the days of the Illuminati, of one hundred years ago, to the Ibsenism and neo-Buddhism of to-day, Boston has been the prey of all sorts of mental frenzies. This is the home of the Transcendentalists in philosophy, of the Deists in theology, of the "Mugwumps" in politics, of Fourierism in sociology.

Some of Boston's fads.

It was not far from here that the "Brook Farm Movement" attempted to put into practice the theories of our French socialists of half a century ago. Here manual labor was to be leavened by the intellectual life, and everything in common resulted in nothing in particular, except debts.

Socialism and bankruptcy.

The abolition movement did not begin here, though it was here that a mob of respectable gentlemen led William Lloyd Garrison about the streets with a rope around his waist; here, also, that the aristocratic part of the community ridiculed Governor Andrew for drilling and pre-

paring the State militia in anticipation of the War of the Rebellion.

Boston also has the honor, a doubtful one, of having been the only community to insult Washington through the person of its chief magistrate, when Washington journeyed through the country after his election as President.

Literary laurels.

Though this part of the world has some serious defects of its qualities, it is fair to say that its qualities, some of them, are of a very distinguished kind. The little knot of men who brought American literature into prominence were New England men—Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, Whittier, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Holmes, Poe, and others of less note, were all native New Englanders, and all practically contemporaries. It would be difficult to match such a literary crop in one season, as that, anywhere else in the world.

Boston's reminiscences.

The Revolution would have been impossible, and the Rebellion next to impossible, without New England's aid. It is well for the rest of America to remember these things, but it would be perhaps more

dignified of New Englanders not to do so much in the way of reminding others of their importance in the past.

The decayed gentlewoman who is continually recalling to us her past, produces the effect upon her less sympathetic listeners of making them to wish that decay were more rapid. *Anecdotage.*

New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City are of this class of listeners when Boston begins to give the details of her former services. After a fortnight of Boston, Cambridge, Concord, and Plymouth, one begins to understand the unsympathetic, not to say weary, attitude of Boston's neighbors of less famous pedigree.

Though the learning and culture are not so general, nor so conspicuous to the man in the street, as I was led to expect, there is no joke about the air of chastened superiority which pervades the people. It is based on little enough now, for literature has flown to New York, and commerce has followed close after, while enterprise has gone West, and the political centre of gravity has moved elsewhere.

Social provinciality.

Boston reached a certain level, socially and intellectually, before any of her rivals, but she seems to have stayed there; hence to-day the foreigner is confronted with the population of a city, in the social and literary short jacket and knickerbockers of a country town. The leaders of thought and action and fashion are no longer to be met with in Boston. The great houses socially are conducted by—in the three or four principal cases—men and women who are as grandfatherless as their friends in New York. The entertainments of the more ambitious social set lack brilliancy, because there is a dearth of variety in the guests.

Poor Mr. McAllister's famous "Four Hundred" is cut down to fourscore here, and as the very essence of society is to be exclusive, exclusiveness here necessarily results in entertainments of the ghastly character of church sociables, only with more gilding.

Social variety.

I attended four dinners, at which the smallest number of guests was twelve, the largest twenty-six or twenty-eight. At all four were my host and hostess; and at all

four was one man, and at three two men, who seemed to be invited to every dinner in Boston.

Not that it was not agreeable to meet these same people everywhere, but in what other capital which assumes such importance is there such a dearth of social variety? You really began to feel as though you lived in the same house with these people, and to understand how it is that so many people in Boston call one another by their *petits noms*. The constant reference to "Mrs. Jim," "Mrs. Billy," "Mrs. Dick;" and to "Bob," "Nat," "Tom," and "Jim," which at first seemed an affectation, ceased to be that, and I understood that it was the natural outcome of the charming familiarity of a country town. *Intimacies.*

The conversation, too, was, much of the time, a conversation *à clef*, so far as I was concerned. The *petits noms* corresponded to the *petites affaires*, which interested them, and made up the stock pieces of their talk. They had all travelled, they all go frequently to New York, and when the conversation was directed to me, personally,

there was some effort at orientation, but when they talked to one another, it was always in the pleasant and familiar jargon, and with the understood allusions, of a party of peasants at a picnic.

Doubtful standing of the home critics.

Nor is this circumscribed and monotonous social life a characteristic noticed by foreigners alone. When I met people at Cambridge, and elsewhere, who were not frequenters of this small circle, I found that even their own neighbors realized that Boston lost, rather than gained, by the provincialism of its chief entertainers. But this may have been jealousy on their part; one can never be sure as to that, unless one lives for years in a community. My short visits to America enable me merely to be a chronicler of what I saw and heard, and not a critic of the Bostonians or of any other people of whom I write.

A longitudinal social cemetery.

It is not to be denied, however, that there seems to be more heart-burning, more striving and pushing, more juggling for social opportunity, here than elsewhere. One long and beautiful avenue is, from all accounts, a longitudinal cemetery of buried social

hopes, with fine residences standing as occupied monuments. Here have flocked the families who, having made money, expected that by taking up their abodes along this avenue they would be that much nearer the social citadel; but, alas! for them, they stormed successfully this first line of breastworks only to find their progress indefinitely delayed there.

Boston's claims.

Pelts and pellets, whiskey and patent medicines, pork and beef, reapers and oil-wells, may land those who benefit largely enough from them in the inner social circle at New York or Chicago, but not so here —so it is claimed, at least.

In New York and Washington one hears certain residential districts spoken of as unfashionable, but it is done in a joking way, and in their social life there, though not to the same extent as in European capitals, one meets the men and women who have made their mark in art, literature, finance, the Church, the State, or at the bar. But, in Boston, society is markedly lacking in this salt of variety.

People I did not meet.

I was astonished to find that of the half

a dozen men in and about Boston whom I, a foreigner, had heard of and wanted to meet, not one was to be met with at such houses as I visited. Even the social stand-by, of whom at least one specimen is always present at a French or English or Italian, and often at a New York, dinner-table, the clergyman, was absent.

The names of the President of Harvard College and of two of its professors, of one clergyman, one banker, and one railway magnate, in Boston, were familiar to me. But I was told that none of these appeared in Boston society. The president, professors, and the clergyman because they did not care to do so, and the banker and the railway magnate because, for some occult reason, they were not asked. And yet if these six men were taken out of Boston, it would be with difficulty that they could be replaced.

Social life here not "society" in the European sense.

I met them all six during my visit, but it was because I went to them, and not because they appeared in the society to which I was introduced from Paris and New York. My host knew them all, but

though I mentioned several times my purpose to see them, it was very apparent that they, and their wives, were not convenient to entertain. He met them in one capacity or another, some of them frequently, but he and his wife did not meet them and their wives. This all seemed to me very stupid, but I suppose that is because I am stupid, for "stupid" is the last word that a Bostonian ever applies to himself or to the institutions he upholds.

X

Class Distinctions

WHEN one visits a community which claims to have given particular attention to the rocking of the cradle of Liberty, one expects to find in that community signs of the vigor of the child Liberty at the advanced age of one hundred years. It is startling to find then, that, of all places, the churches are the very citadels of class distinctions.

Boston at church.

After I had attended to my own devotions early in the morning, I was taken to one of the oldest churches in Boston. Here the pews are all owned, actually owned, by the worshippers, who can dispose of them to their heirs like any other property. As this congregation assembled, the different families marched in procession to their seats—or pews, as they are called

here—walked in, and shut and locked the doors behind them.

Ecclesiastical exclusiveness.

This is the high-water mark of exclusiveness, so far as my experience of the world goes. No club, no theatre, no society, no office, is more completely in the hands of its possessors. You can be elected even to the French Academy if you merit it; even the President of the United States must open his official residence to the people from time to time, and shake hands with whosoever comes, but in these houses of God in Boston, membership may continue a family affair, like the throne of England or Russia. When this aristocratic ecclesiastical arrangement was explained to me, my astonishment was unbounded, but none of my informants seemed to share my astonishment.

The vulgarity and the blasphemous commercial aspect of the whole thing seemed not to appear to them. Why there should not be "job-lots," "bargains," "booms," and "corners" in the matter of "salvation," as in other affairs, they evidently do not understand. At the large

church I attended in the afternoon, the pews were, I was told, rented in much the same fashion, though there were no little doors to lock, as in the first church I attended.

Strange position of the clergy.

The clergymen who preside over these institutions are paid a regular salary, and dismissed at the option of the pew-owners and pew-renters. They have, of course, no more actual freedom than a butler or a coachman. If they do not preach what is wanted, or if they do not conduct themselves, socially and politically, to the taste of their masters, they can be summarily dismissed at a few months' notice.

The shepherds and the folds.

I asked how it was that priests who assume the power to pronounce absolution and forgiveness are at the same time practically without power even to retain their places, or to pronounce their flock right or wrong, since the sheep have only to get together and vote to eject the shepherd from the fold when it pleases them so to do.

It was admitted that this was apparently a strange anomaly, but that, as a matter of fact, there is seldom any difficulty in re-

placing a shepherd. On the contrary, many shepherds apply for every vacant fold, and often there are regular political caucuses, and much manœuvring by the friends of this shepherd, or that, to get him elected. Shepherds of other folds, smaller or less lucrative, often write, and ask to be allowed to present themselves for the suffrage of a larger or wealthier fold which is known to be vacant.

So universal is this club-like management and exclusiveness of the churches, that the audiences you see in them are as fashionably dressed as the audience at a first-rate theatre. No poor people ever think of attending them, any more than they think of entering a fashionable club.

The poor man at church.

Often these wealthy ecclesiastical clubs have "chapels" or "missions" in other parts of the city, to which the poor are supposed to go, but to which, as a rule, the self-respecting poor—and rightly so—will not go. Those who do go are the sycophants, who go in order to fawn upon, and get money and clothes and fuel from, the representatives of the rich families who

go there to teach, or to assist at the services.

Said my clerical friend to me: "Those chapels and missions of the rich city churches are hot-beds of hypocrisy, jealousy, and sycophancy. I would not go to one if I were a poor man, and I have little respect for the poor man who does."

Clerical comment.

"Where do the poor go, and who looks after them, then?" I inquired. "Your people and the Salvation Army look after them spiritually, so far as it is done at all—and it is to be remembered in this connection that fifty-six per cent. of the total white population of America is not identified with any church, and that thirty-six per cent. of these belong to the poorer class—and we Protestants contribute largely toward their material support. Why, many of these churches," he continued, "are just as easily defined socially as the clubs. This set of people go to one, that set go to another, and so on; and people get into them, and go to them, very often for the chance of the social recognition that may follow from such attendance."

The churches and social prestige.

With all that, I, as a foreigner, have nothing to do. It is another of the many problems that the Americans have to solve for themselves. The subject interests me only as another phase of the unrepublican state of affairs here. It interests me also, as showing how here again the theory results in the most deplorable practice, and yet the people themselves, with their customary good-humored indifference, pass it by and neglect it.

Pas mon affaire!

Advertisements of summer villas, of yachts, and of second-hand carriages appear side by side with the advertisements of "centrally located" pews to rent in this or that fashionable church. One man was pointed out to me, in Boston, who sub-let pews in three different churches, and made "a good thing out of all of them," as my friend expressed it. One can fancy it to be quite in keeping with the American genius for trading, to pick up a job-lot of pews in a church, then to "boom" the church, and sub-let the pews at an advance.

Bulls and bears at church.

I am not aware that there are actually brokers who devote themselves exclusively

to this business, but there is no reason on the face of things as here conducted why there should not be. At any rate, you often hear clergymen spoken of as having "great drawing power," meaning that they attract large audiences, who buy or rent pews, and thus keep the church exchequer full. Twice in the newspapers I have seen notices of the dismissal of clergymen because they could not "fill" their churches, and thus meet expenses.

Stock-market value of a minister.

When I think of the two priests in my own parish, and of the pittance that they receive, and of the small "drawing power" they possess, and yet of the boundless good they do, and the endless services they render our small community, I wonder how long either one of them would consent to remain in a parish where his services were measured by the receipts at the door, as though he were a leading performer in a theatrical troupe. This system must be galling to the devoted clergy, as it certainly is productive of the most cynical worldliness in those who are callous or indifferent.

My "Monsieur Le Curé."

Here again the good-humored *laisser-*

aller policy of the Americans reveals itself. The clerical mountebanks are ridiculed, sneered at, and, in some quarters, openly despised, and yet crowds go to hear them and to laugh at their jokes; they go to pray, and remain to scoff. They are applauded but not trusted, as in the case of some of the American publicists. In fact, if a man is widely popular in America, if he be much applauded, and have many followers and many listeners, you may set him down, in two out of four cases, as being a man whom the people secretly distrust.

Clerical mountebanks.

This is a peculiar state of affairs, but it is borne out by the fact that it is becoming more and more difficult to nominate for election to the presidency of the United States a really first-class man. Since the first six presidents, with the one very notable exception of Abraham Lincoln—and even in his case he was not known to the people when they elected him—there has not been elected to the office of chief magistrate a single individual of first-rate powers, while some who have filled the office

The case of the presidents.

have been, as in the case of Taylor, Buchanan, Pierce, Polk, Hayes, and the first Harrison, men of very second-rate abilities indeed. Some of these presidents after election however have proved themselves to be unexpectedly capable.

Public and private schools.

Another very palpable reason for the growing divergence of classes in this country is the rapidly growing popularity of the private, as distinct from the public, schools. A century, or even half a century, ago the boys of any community, rich and poor alike, went to school and to college together, and knew one another intimately all through their boyhood and youth.

Growing gulf between rich and poor.

There was less jealousy and less suspicion between classes then, because the boys were educated together, and also because there were not then, as now, such vast differences of wealth between the rich and the poor. All the people lived more nearly on the same level. In the days of Washington, the two Adamses, and Jefferson, the youths of the land were educated along the same lines, and in the same schools.

To-day all that is changed. The public schools in the large cities are attended by the children of the poor almost exclusively, while the children of the well-to-do are sent to private schools—some of them on the plan of the great English public schools —where the fees and expenses for one boy's schooling for a year range from 2,500 to 5,000 francs.

The private schools.

These schools are quite out of reach of even people with moderate incomes. This is a severe blow at the theory of popular education, and strikes also at the very heart of the republican theory, that all should profit by the same educational opportunities. Instead of this, there is rapidly growing an aristocracy of education. This aristocracy of the private schools distrusts the democracy of the public schools, and the democracy of the public schools is suspicious, and often jealous, of the aristocracy of the private schools. They do not meet, they do not know one another, they have little in common with one another, and they vote against one another.

An educated, well-trained, and honest

gentleman, who would be the very best servant of the poor, because he knows what they do not know, and because he would neither rob them nor wilfully deceive them, is often cut off from political service because those who ought to be his constituents do not know him, and distrust him mainly because he is not one of them.

It is perhaps true that in France, England, and Germany the rich and the poor are not educated together — much less so in France and Germany than in England—but the various classes are not so unacquainted with one another, not on such self-conscious and restrained terms with one another as they are here. They meet oftener, strange to say, on a common basis, of every man on his individual merit, without regard to rank, position, or fortune, than here.

Class distinctions in Europe.

In Germany they are educated together, because there the public schools and universities, which are open to all, and very cheap, are better than any private educational institutions.

Germany.

The same is true of France, and in both

France and Germany they serve side by side in the army. *France.*

In England they know one another in the army and navy, and they meet one another continually in the hunting-field, at cricket and foot-ball, and in the country, and out-of-door life, lived by so many English people. The English laborer touches his hat to the village squire, but he is, as a matter of fact, on far friendlier, and even more intimate, terms with him than is the American millionnaire with any man, or men, of similar position in his neighborhood. *England.*

In France, especially, but in England and Italy also, your servants are your friends, sometimes very dear friends; but there is none of that here, just where one might expect it. They do not take care of one another here, in the case of masters and servants, as I delight to take care of old François at home, and he delights to take care of me, only in different capacities; they do not even care for one another; they simply hire and are hired. *Servants and hirelings.*

In Europe there is a traditional feeling

of responsibility on the part of the powerful for the weak, of the rich for the poor. The squire's house is often the hospital, the bank, and the asylum for his poorer neighbors. On the other hand, the American millionnaire—with exceptions, notable exceptions indeed—is the most heedlessly irresponsible magnate that the world has seen since the days of feudalism.

Responsibility of wealth.

The enormous establishments maintained by French, English, and Austrian men of wealth are laughed at here, but often enough they represent the responsibility those men feel to their neighborhood and their neighbors, and are far more democratic than the wasteful luxury of America's rich men and women, who recognize no such responsibility to any neighborhood or to any neighbors.

One comes to feel here that no art is more difficult than the art of being rich. This country needs a number of universities devoted solely to such instruction. "Beggars mounted run their horse to death." It is the rich as well as the poor who are making this republic a land of

class distinctions, a land of privileges, a land of social and political jealousies. Minor and official distinctions of class, of creed, of service, of rank, are largely obliterated, it is true, but nowhere in the world is the line so rudely drawn between the rich and the poor, between the master and the menial, between the workers who do not use their hands and the laborers who do, as here.

Heedless rich and envious poor.

In Europe there is great diversity of striving; men are working for different ends; many men know when they have enough, and drop out of the race, to live contentedly on what they have.

But not so in America. The word "enough" is the loneliest, and the least often employed, word in the American vocabulary. There is no diversity of striving; all are striving for money, money, money. This makes the race fast and furious, and competition and rivalry bitter, and not always honorable. Money here is tyrant, as it is tyrant nowhere else. Men will do for money here what men will do for money nowhere else.

Wealth the only standard.

In Europe men are divided into many classes, and these different classes have their particular rivalries and competitions. Here all men are in the one colossal class of the money-makers, all fighting one another, all fearful of one another, and all recognizing but one class distinction—that between those who have and those who have not.

The scramble for dollars.

It cannot surely be long before this state of things must crystallize into political parties. Heretofore men have divided along political lines, soon they will divide along social lines; and then, if I mistake not, the national barometer will begin going down toward a point marked *The Deluge.*

I find myself surprised at myself in making these observations. The climate here is intoxicating, the people are optimistic, the material wealth is enormous—the actual valuation of all real and personal property in the United States is 1,605,925,000,000 of francs—and yet I cannot put away from me the impression that another, and an even more ferocious, struggle, be-

Climatic intoxication.

tween those who have and those who have not, looms not far off upon the horizon.

I can see the mortgage-burdened West and Southwest maddened by demagogues demanding some prosperity-killing, political or economic, or financial, change.

I can see frightened Eastern capitalists sending money to Canada, to England, and to Germany for safe-keeping. *Frightened capitalists.*

I can see holders of American securities in Europe literally dumping them back upon the market here.

I can see the social jealousies, that the Americans either will not, or cannot, see, exchanging surly looks for rifles, and frowns for gunpowder; and then I can see these seventy millions in such a turbulent death-struggle as would awe the world, even the world which still hears the re-echoing shrieks and groans and laughter of our own Revolution. Thank God, you and I will not be there to see! Please God, it may be a false vision and I a mistaken prophet! *A vision.* But unless the people here who know, and have, awaken to some sort of sense of responsibility, and the better class of news-

papers cease to tamper with the dynamite of class prejudice, trouble is sure to come.

Underlying good sense.

It is true that thus far the sturdy good sense which underlies the indifference and recklessness of these people has always come to the front in the hour of danger, and triumphed over all obstacles and all attacks. But it is well to notice that each time the attack is more furious than before, the anarchism more outspoken, and the spread of discontent covers a wider area. So long as the social questions can be entangled with matters concerning the currency and the tariff, the rival camps are themselves split into parties, but if the battle is ever fairly engaged between the would-haves and the have-gots, there promises to be a reign of terror for awhile. After each election, people forget how frightened they were before it. It were well if they could remember their fright for some time after as well as before!

The would-haves and the have-gots.

XI

Concord, Plymouth, and Cambridge

MY visits to Concord and Plymouth were, I must confess, disappointments. At Concord the houses where certain great men have lived, the streets through which they were wont to walk, and in the neighborhood certain spots consecrated to the first outbreaks of the War of the Revolution, are shown to you.

First impressions of Concord.

To the foreigner, whose imagination is not fired by these recollections, the place is but a barren country village. The names of Emerson and Thoreau were more or less familiar, but some of the other names, that of a man named Alcott, for example, who, I was told, was a great philosopher, were names I had never seen and never heard.

American insularity.

The insularity of Americans is very much to the fore on such occasions. They are lacking in that culture which consists in fine discriminations. Open and undisguised surprise was expressed at Concord that I had never heard of Alcott. But when I came to inquire what he had written, it turned out that he had written nothing; and yet the foreigner was supposed to know the distinguishing features of this literary foundling of a little town in Massachusetts. It reminds one of a child who says to the total stranger: "Why, my name's Jeanne; don't you know me?"

After the rather pompous young clergyman who accompanied us on our tour about Concord had retailed to me the literary and political gossip of the place, as though each minute fragment were a commonplace of European discussion, I could not refrain from a little subdued impertinence. When he asked me, therefore, what Americans were best known abroad—they always say "abroad" here in referring to Europe, as though we were anchored off their coast somewhere—I told him that

the two names I had heard most often were those of Mark Twain and John L. Sullivan. *Alcott versus John L. Sullivan*

There is a grain of truth in this statement, though, no doubt, this admission on my part left my reputation in Concord torn to tatters. But even though Emerson was foolish enough to say that Alcott had the finest mind since Plato, I never heard of him, and thousands of Frenchmen, Germans, and Englishmen of undoubted claims to literary eminence have never heard of him; and though Concord bemoan our intellectual limitations, I am bound to make the confession.

The only things that I remember distinctly about Concord are this young clerical prig and a really fine statue by a sculptor named French. To say that I remember them for entirely different reasons, I owe it to the sculptor to admit at once.

To Plymouth I went, accompanied by a genial and cultivated acquaintance, and it is due to him, rather than to Plymouth perhaps, that I owe my enjoyment of the journey. He was a scholar, a man of the world, and devoted to his own particular subject. *A guide to Plymouth.*

He had travelled, and had met men all over Europe, and so made no attempt to assume that my education had been neglected because I was unfamiliar with the insular distinctions of a provincial community.

Pilgrims, Puritans and planets.

But even at Plymouth the kindly gentleman, who went about with us, devoted a good share of the day to an explanation, for my benefit, of the difference between the Pilgrims and the Puritans. He seemed to think that most of the planetary disturbances and many of the European complications of the day might be allayed if the difference between the Pilgrims and the Puritans were kept in mind.

This absorbing interest in the affairs of the moment, and the affairs of one's own community, is an American trait. Perhaps it is due to their isolation from the larger concerns of the world; but whatever the cause, it is looked upon by most Americans as unpatriotic to see anything good outside of America.

No criticism—except political criticism—is tolerated, even in the newspapers. It

is a fine quality in a man to stand by his friends, whether they are right or wrong, once they are in trouble; it is a fine thing in the people of a nation to stand by their flag, once that flag is unfurled in battle; but surely the frank criticism of one's friends and of one's country in their prosperity is not treason.

American sensitiveness.

But these people are personally and, as a nation, fearfully sensitive. Not to shout the most absurd patriotic bombast all the time is, for a politician, political suicide; and not to do much the same thing in the case of the private individual, is to earn the reputation of being finical. This tendency protects each community, and the nation at large, in a narrow-mindedness only equalled in Turkey and China.

I was told that there are only twenty-four towns in all Massachusetts without a free public library, and no children to whom are not offered the very best opportunities for free schooling. Here, as in so many other departments of life in America, the theory is excellent, but the results in practice are by no means what this and other

Democratic nostrums.

democratic nostrums promised. There are jails, and criminals, and insane asylums, drunkards, and tenement-houses, and political jobbery in Massachusetts, just as there are in France, in England, and Italy, and, no doubt, in much the same proportion to the inhabitants.

As for the country towns, I have never seen anywhere, out of Italy, such numbers of apparently unoccupied young men and boys. At every railway-station you see them, at the street-corners you see them, and, unless they are Transcendental philosophers on the browse for epigrams, as my slim young Concord clergyman would have me believe, they probably get into mischief just as do other idlers in countries where there are fewer public libraries and fewer free schools.

Transcendental loafers.

Travelled Americans have often told me how they have been amazed in France, in England, and in Germany, to find how little the people of the interior towns and villages know of the great world outside them. But here this indifference takes another and worse form.

At Concord and Plymouth and other towns, not excepting Boston even, there is a complete self-satisfaction with the very little they do know, and a calm assumption that they are the ideal communities of the world, toward which the benighted communities of the rest of the world are striving, which, if it were not so sad, would be highly ridiculous. *Self-sufficiency.*

Here is a great State with only twenty-four villages which lack free libraries, and in it the largest university in the nation, and for the last twenty-five years not a book has been written there which has been universally welcomed, as were the writings of Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, and Whittier. Indeed, since the death of Webster, Sumner, and Andrew, there has not been produced by this community a great man, unless, perhaps, it be the present bishop of the State.* *Intellectual sterility.*

It is often said in America that their great advantage over the rest of the world lies in the fact that no traditions and no

* This was written before the death of the late Bishop Brooks.—ED.

prejudices stop the way to progress. On the other hand, what is always forgotten is the fact of their hide-bound attachment to their own theories, no matter what the outcome may be in practice.

Theory and practice.

The theory of universal education prescribed by law is a good theory, but in practice it has neither produced an exceptional number of scholars, nor has it decreased the number of dependents and delinquents, or cleansed politics. The theory of checks for the transfer of luggage is a good theory and sounds very convenient; in practice it delays the arrival of luggage, causes the traveller to miss his connections, and in the end is ruinously expensive. The theory of many mechanical contrivances for personal intercourse, such as the typewriter, the microphone, short-hand, and the telephone is a good theory; but in practice it fails notably to compete with the personal service of Europe.

The theory of political equality.

The theory of the political equality of every man is a good theory, and it has, be it said in its favor, done away with a certain servility of the lower to the upper

classes; but in practice it has ostracized good manners and obedience in all classes, and put the management of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and other cities in the hands of unprincipled and indifferent money-grabbers. The theory of one man —one vote—sounds well, but, strange to say, in every presidential election no such thing exists even. In each State every voter throws his ballot not for his one candidate, but for the whole number of electors allotted to his State. Hence each voter in New York State votes for thirty-six votes for President, while in the smaller States, of course, the voter's vote is of less value.

The value of a vote.

It is true that the people are not blinded by prejudice, but they are drunk with theories which their lack of a certain international experience renders them incapable of criticising. I am happy to say that the above was written before my visit to Harvard College. For once there, I was told that the rest of the country looks upon Harvard College as a hot-bed of political toryism. But that again seems to me to be

due to another theory, with its attendant bad practice.

The theory of this land is free speech and free thought, but the practice is the muzzling of both. There are men here, and elsewhere, who, because they are not political hirelings, and because they write and speak what they believe, without reference to whether it will or will not accrue to their personal popularity, by this very putting into practice of the national theory, are harshly criticised, ridiculed, and stormed at, by almost every newspaper in the country.

When a man's ancestors, some of them, have died for free thought and free speech, he has a warm place in his heart for any institution which insists upon this privilege, whether he agrees altogether with what is thought, and said sometimes, or not.

Memories of the war.

I saw the usual sights here. In the beautiful hall built to commemorate the men who fell in battle in 1861–65, I saw six or seven hundred of the students dining together, waited upon by the negroes, whom their fellows fought to free from slavery.

I attended a lecture on the Fine Arts, and another on English, and found the latter particularly interesting from the novel way in which the subject was handled.

I got up early one morning and went to the chapel for morning prayers. Until recently the attendance on morning prayers has been obligatory, now it is voluntary. The attendance was very small, and most of those present were, I was informed, men in training for the various athletic contests, who are obliged by their regimen to get up early. With the usual American ingenuity, "prayers" are made use of to enforce this law of athletics, for thus it can be seen easily by the trainers and captains of "teams" and "crews," that their men are out of bed when they should be. *Prayers and athletics.*

There is one official chaplain to the university, but clergymen of different creeds take charge of the religious work in turn, and when one or another of these is in charge, I was told that more of the students attend the services.

Some of the newer buildings are costly and handsome, but the older buildings, in

what is called "the college yard," cannot bear comparison with the buildings of the different colleges of the English universities.

Meagre entertaining.

The entertaining here is on a modest scale, and only here and there a professor who has, or whose wife has, money, is enabled to entertain to any continued extent. The salaries paid are larger than in French or German universities, but nothing like as large as those received by the heads of colleges in England.

The president is a man of admirable presence and distinguished speech, who enjoys that paradoxical, but most genuine, popularity—the popularity of the unpopular man. People believe in him without liking him; while, unless my impressions are wrong, the majority of America's popular idols are men whom the people applaud without trusting them.

Academic comparisons.

I met some of the students, and if I may permit myself a broad, and, I must admit also, a hasty, generalization, I should say that there are fewer men here with the wide culture of the universities of Europe, but perhaps more who have devoted them-

selves to specialties, particularly the specialties of science.

One might fancy that there would be a good deal of intercourse between the university men, both professors and undergraduates, and the people of Boston, but I am told there is comparatively little. Many Boston men are graduates of the college, and many have sons there, but either on account of the provincialism of Boston society as a whole, or through lack of social enterprise on both sides, the good that might be expected to result from a large university and a large city, side by side, is not present.

Cambridge and Boston.

Harvard, recruiting its students from all over America, is not up to Boston socially; and Boston, recruiting its fashionable people, year by year, from the ranks of the newly rich, is not up to Harvard intellectually. Whatever the reason, the fact remains the same, and is another indication of the narrowness of much of the social and intellectual life here.

XII

American English

NO stranger may visit Boston without discovering that there is a timid consciousness on the part of Bostonians that it is a profitable thing to hear English as spoken in Boston. The broad "a" is as much a product of Boston, so they think there, as codfish-balls or baked beans. A spinster of uncertain years is no more titteringly offended when you underestimate her years than is Boston when you allude to the pronunciation of the English language there. My own acquaintance with English is too slight to permit of my posing as a fair critic on this question. Still, even I could not fail to note differences in the different parts of the States that I had the honor to visit.

Boston English.

The soft, guttural speech of the Southerner, the sharp, metallic nasality of the West, the dodging of the letter "r" in

"girl" and "bird" and "shirt," and the like, in New York, all these were soon familiar to me. The Bostonian, however, assumes that he speaks like an Englishman. Fortunately, for him, he does not; unfortunately for him, in many cases he tries to do so.

Sometimes the conquered are the conquerors. In Boston the Bunker Hill Monument commemorates a victory, but the neo-Briticism of their speech proves that here again the conquerors made enduring conquests.

Americanisms.

"Highfalutin" and "gerrymander," and "buncombe" and "variety show" (for music-hall entertainment), "notion counter," "gone where the woodbine twineth" (meaning up the spout), "busted" (meaning bankrupt), "spread-eagleism," "bull-doze," "catch on," "put-up job," "too previous," political "pull," "bumptious," "give us a rest," and many other words and phrases, are, if not academic, still capital additions to the vocabulary of everyday conversation.

The stranger greets these brand-new lin-

gual visitors with effusive delight. The stranger, too, rather admires the grandfatherless millionnaires, and views with pleasure their doughty sons and daughters clambering up the social ladder. The American, strange to say, is apparently the last to appreciate what are the genuine novelties and the real charms of his own civilization. He is all too often ashamed of the wrong things, like the college-educated son of a man who, without any breeding, has made his "pile."

If there be a quality for which "buncombe" or "highfalutin" or "spread-eagleism" supplies the exact interpretation —and there is—then these words ought to be welcome. If there is a stage of civilization in a new country where sheer personal prowess hews its way to success without any of the advantages of university training, then the exponent of that ought to be welcomed, and not apologized for.

Assumed confidence.

There is a twittering self-consciousness about the Americans however—except on the Fourth of July—which makes them uncertain as to what is good form and what

is bad form, in both their speech and their manners. One would find himself quite at fault, should he accept the satisfied and self-glorifying statements of the newspapers and the political orators about "the greatest country on earth," "God's own country," "we can lick creation," "a hundred years of prosperity unequalled in the æons of all the planets," as being the serious estimate of themselves, held by most Americans. All that is merely the self-deceptive boasting of a people who are in reality diffident about many of their institutions, about their manners, and even about their speech.

No consensus of the competent.

"*Consuetudo certissima loquendi magistra*" writes Quintilian, and what the Americans lack, above all things, are precedents and experience. This dearth of fixed standards in manners and speech, and of any class acknowledged to be worthy leaders in such matters, leaves each community and every man to shift for himself. This ought to produce a picturesque variety of manners and of speech which would be both interesting to, and respected by, the foreign visitor. As a matter of fact, however, the

Americans "hanker" (first-rate word this) after just those precedents, just those ceremonious formalities, for which they have no equivalents.

True, this is more apparent in the East than in the West and South, but in my two visits, with an interval between of some years, I can see that their self-sufficiency is lessening, and that their striving to adopt the manners, customs, clothes, ceremonies, and formalities of what the newspapers and the "buncombe" orators are pleased to call "the effete monarchies of Europe," is spreading ever farther into the interior.

It is only in the larger cities that the newspapers can be depended upon for good English, nor can much confidence be placed in them even, as authorities. The mass of people who read their local newspapers are not improved in their writing or speaking of English, thereby.

Journalism compared.

I believe I am right in stating that it is only since the late war that newspapers here have been profitable enough to employ first-rate men. In France, and in England, the very best men from Jules

Simon to Zola, and from Lord Salisbury down, have been proud to enroll themselves as journalists. It is only within the last thirty years here, that the newspapers have improved in tone sufficiently to make it at all usual for the better class of educated men to be connected with them in any capacity.

Two Journalists.

It was my pleasure, and my profit, some years ago to meet Mr. George William Curtis, and since that time I have met Mr. Charles Dana. The former was a very unusual type of gentleman, and a man of delicate humor, refined speech, and unbending integrity; while the latter is a scholar in many different fields, and an amateur in everything. Such men as these, and there are doubtless many others, mark, in the field of journalism, the sharp contrast, which seems to me, the more I travel here, to be the salient feature of the civilization.

You no sooner make up your mind at the tumble-down wharf to which your steamer is tied, that you have landed at a frontier town, than you marvel at the finished luxury of your rooms at the hotel.

Sharp contrasts again.

You are about to make a generalization from the beefsteak and ice-cream dinner of your neighbor in the hotel restaurant, when you dine off gold, and drink from crystal, at the house of your friend's friend; you prepare to damn the newspapers after reading the lust, lechery, and larceny headed columns of one or another journal, when you are surprised into hesitation by a witty half column in the *Sun* or a dignified discussion in the *Tribune,* though even the best edited of them cannot refrain from calling names, and applying vulgar epithets, in true street-arab fashion.

No country in the world that I have visited tempts you so often to say "all men are liars," or something worse, and brings you up so often with a round turn, to tempt you into extravagant praise.

Then, too, in this matter of the use of English, either spoken or printed, a Frenchman hesitates to make categorical statements. It was, alas! one of my own countrymen who, translating a French culinary recipe into English, wrote: "The rabbit

wants to be skinned alive, the hare prefers to wait."

The peculiar quality of American humor is apt to land a foreigner in many pitfalls. So much of the newspaper writing and of the everyday speech of the people is replete with gross exaggerations, that one is at a loss very often to know what is meant seriously.

American humor.

I distinctly remember the puzzled look on the face of a distinguished French diplomat at a dinner in Washington, when one of the guests, without a smile, told how two burglars had broken into the house of Jay Gould, but before the police could be summoned they were robbed of their tools.

The so-called funny papers appear each week with page after page teeming with jokes and stories of this description. There is a certain sadness in this very humor. I have often thought that in the case of individuals, as well as in the case of the professional journalistic purveyors of fun, this universal love of gross exaggeration and of shocking contrasts is due to a certain fatalism of the people.

Humor and local conditions.

The sharp changes of fortune and of social position, the sudden springing into political prominence of this man or that, the father a pedler, the son a millionnaire; the grandfather penniless, the grandson an entertainer of princes; the mother an Irish washerwoman, the daughter the wife of a prince; these changes, so out of the steady line of development, give a fatalistic tinge to life here. Consequently, there is much trusting to luck, much discontent with the steady grind, which is all life has for most of us.

The newspapers parade and picture to the masses these almost miraculous changes of the wheel of fortune, and make the people in many cases to look upon the commonplace methods of earning, saving, and steady, uneventful work, as distasteful and unfair. Fate has this prize for that one, or this blank for me. They have not lived long enough here to know, or to care much about, the theory of averages, or to believe very strongly in the possible happiness of the golden mean.

The language itself, the speech of the

man in the street, and the writing in the more vulgar news-sheets, are moulded somewhat by this sadness and discontent on the one hand, and by this turbulent and accidental happiness produced by marvellous changes on the other.

Occidental Fatalism.

A surprise, an exaggeration, a success, the winning ticket in the lottery, are ever to the fore in the minds of many as a possibility. Who may not "strike ile," who may not find coal or clay on his property, who may not "strike it rich," in a gold or silver mine?

Nature herself, from this great wealthy lap of hers, may tumble out a precious gift into the hands of the least likely passer-by.

Language is, after all, but the passing cloud-picture of the mind. The reticence and the carefully pruned phrases of the Briton, the gorgeous compliments of the Eastern races, the hazy, all-defining, parenthetic speech of the Germans, the clean-cut epigrammatic speech of my own land, and this grotesque humor of exaggeration or underestimation so common here, are

all typical of the men and the minds behind them.

Be it said that to my ears, at least, the English of their best people is equal, if not better, than that of the same class in Great Britain.

Of the American voice, however, one cannot speak so flatteringly. There is a hard, rasping, metallic quality about it. This, I believe, is due in part to the climate, for it is more noticeable in the middle West and in northern New England than in the South and along the milder parts of the coast, though the negroes, who have been here now for a century, have still very soft, and sometimes even sweet, voices.

An acidulated Vestal.

But given a self-confident, perhaps short-haired and independent, spinster from Maine, and nowhere else in the world of spoken language is vocalization so distressing to the ear. The general tendency, too, seems to be to speak much too loud. Men and women in hotels and tram-cars and railway-trains seem, by the loud pitch of their voices, to invite you to share what

they are saying. The same publicity pervades their speech which pervades their lives.

The voice and the man.

It is a Frenchman who says that his only objection to solitude is that there is no one near to whom he may speak of its charm. The American might well say that his only objection to solitude is that there is no crowd to elbow him, or to listen to him. This loud, piercing, unmodulated voice, reflects the love of a crowd, of bustle, and much business.

I am writing to you, of course, of the men and women in the street, so to speak. Well-bred people here do not yell in their drawing-rooms, nor do they screech at their dinner-tables, but the general impression one receives of speech and voice is as I have described it. Both are too loud. The haw-hawing hesitancy of the Englishman even, "comes as a poultice to heal the blows of sound," after much of this hard, piercing, and often rasping, speech. A Democracy must necessarily produce a distinct quality of voice. Where all are free to speak, where all assert the right to be

heard, the voices that are to survive must be loud and distinct.

A man may look like a monkey, and yet turn out to be a philosopher; a man may dress like a vagabond, and yet have the intuitions of a scholar and a gentleman; the face, the expression of the eyes, the dress, the manners even, may all be deceptive, but the voice and speech of men and women classify them infallibly. Gentle voices and simple speech are the heritage of the gentle and the simple alone. Princes who are peasants lack them, peasants who are princes have them, and here as elsewhere one finds princes who are peasants at heart, and peasants who are nature's princes.

Nature's aristocracy.

XIII

Travel à l'Américaine

ON leaving Boston I made my first acquaintance with the American sleeping-car. During that night-journey I was impressed as never before with the demoralizing effects of the theory of democracy when put in practice.

The American cars are long and narrow, with a passage-way running down the centre, from door to door, and seats on each side. Each car of the common pattern will seat eighty or more people, and the Pullman, or more expensive cars, a few less. For an hour or more I sat in one of the common cars, in which you are entitled to a seat for the payment of the usual fare—in the others you pay something additional. There are no compartments, there is, of course, no privacy. The conductor comes and goes, slamming the doors at each end

Personal privacy.

of the car as he enters and passes out. Another under-official sticks his head in, now and again, and shouts the names of stations, and also slams the door. An imp of infernal origin wends his way up and down the aisle, offering newspapers, magazines, fruit, chewing-gum, smelling-salts, cigars, candy — which being interpreted means *bon-bons*—for sale, and shouting the while at the top of his lungs. He pitches parcels of chewing-gum, boxes of *bon-bons*, magazines, and paper-covered books into your lap, leaves them a moment, and then returns to collect them again.

A peripatetic fiend.

Apparently there is no redress for the impertinences of this youth. To elderly gentlemen chewing-gum is given to hold, matrons receive copies of sporting-journals, copies of Zola or Paul de Kock are given to maidens, to nurses with children are, at the discretion of this young devil, given apples or nuts or candy, for which the children cry when he returns to collect them.

This position, which it would seem requires the sagacity and discrimination of a

Ulysses, is filled by a mere apple-giving young Paris, who, by his careless distribution of highly seasoned literature and destructive edibles and chewibles, may debauch the minds, and upset the digestions, of scores of innocent travellers.

Here again I pause to express my astonishment to think that I have the audacity to attempt to describe these bewildering Americans even to my own sister. No other people would submit to have this travel-disturber let loose upon them. No down-trodden Armenian but what would slay a Turk, were a Turk allowed to torture him in this fashion; no Chinaman who would not rise and strangle a Japanese conqueror who should attempt to tease him, by the hour, by the mile, by the whole journey, in this manner.

Submission to nuisances.

These good Americans pay the railroad company a round sum for transportation, and then permit themselves to be put in a cage, with a monkey in uniform, who shoves baskets of saliva-polished apples under their noses, who tumbles cheap literature into their laps, who plays Tantalus to

their children with indigestible sweets, and who yells his nasalized *menu* in their ears from start to finish of their journey. I repeat, who can understand, who can make comprehensible, such a people, to one who has not seen them at home?

Practical demonstration of democracy.

These cars are the typical illustration of democracy in practice. Here at last the theory is in full working order for inspection. In my car there are a hundred people. They have all paid the same amount, they travel at the same rate of speed, they are treated exactly alike. Each seat is as good as, and no better than, every other. Solomon and LeBaudy, Socrates and Smindyrides, St. Francis and Hippocleides, wise man and fool, philosopher and debauchee, saint and sensualist, here they are at last all together, every man on an equality with his neighbor, every man treated just like every other man, and now, how do we like it?

I am a republican, the reddest of red republicans they call me at home, but I do not like it. I do not like it because everyone is necessarily brought, in point of discom-

fort at least, to the level of the lowest. A German—I know him by the "*Also auf wiedersehen!*" spoken to his friend as the train rolled out of the station—takes off his boots, puts up his stockinged feet on the rail of the seat, fits his head into a corner of the window near him, and goes to sleep, to snore.

Half a dozen seats in front of me is a woman with a baby. The baby, fresh from heaven, is doubtless an aristocrat. The conductor, the other official, and the train-monkey slam doors, and yell the baby into a frenzy. It wails and cries and screams. I pity the mother, to be sure, but as I have none of the compensating comforts of that baby when it crows and goos and smiles, I see no reason why, with a hundred others, this baby should play upon my nerves as though I were a zither, and the baby an automatic thumb-ring, worked by electricity. I have talked about equality in my day, and sometimes, too, of fraternity, but now that I am a prisoner in this elongated cage of equality, heated to the point of suffocation—no wonder catarrh, pneumonia,

A disgruntled aristocrat.

Over-heated cars.

and consumption play havoc here—rushing through space propelled by that non-recognizer of persons, steam, I am bound to say that I like it not.

Equality at its worst.

There may be a saint in this car, but what can his odor of sanctity do to mitigate the evils of this unwholesome and overheated atmosphere? There may be a sage in this car, but what can his quiet thoughts do to compensate for those infantile shrieks? There may be a philosopher sitting within a few yards of me, but what can he do to guard the innocent against the insidious advances of that purveyor of literary and candied nuisances?

Does not equality in this sense mean merely the dead level of the lowest? Ah, but it is replied, no man who thinks, supposes for a moment that equality means more than political equality, equality before the law. But, pray, what does this political equality portend? Have not the masses in their hands the power to turn this nation into just such a company as I am describing? Is this indeed not the more likely outcome of democracy carried to

its ultimate point? "*Le médiocrité inquiète et jalouse gémit de tous les succès, parce que le champ de génie se rétrécit sans cesse à ses faibles yeux.*"

What may a tax on incomes, on corporations, on railroads, on great commercial companies not do toward levelling all down to the feeblest? And why may not these jealous and discontented voters bring about just such a state of things, where commercial shrewdness, where inventive talent, where thrifty investing of one's surplus, may be made fruitless? I see no reason. The Constitution itself is subject to amendments under certain conditions, and nothing else stands in the way. *Possible dangers.*

That car full of overheated sovereigns, each with the sceptre of a vote in his hands, made me shiver. I admit this the more frankly, because if my critics pooh-pooh at me, they must needs do the same at the scores of financiers who re-invested large sums in England during the late war, and at many others, who have once or twice of late years, during a financial or political panic, sent large deposits of money to Ca-

nadian banks or hidden away their gold. I am not alone in thus imagining possible disasters, I am only alone in having no reason for not confessing what I think.

I find as a rule that most Americans are little disturbed by such a line of discussion. The immense wealth of the country, the astounding progress of the last hundred years, and the terrible strain of the War of the Rebellion so successfully borne, these give them confidence and make them hopeful. Then, too, they are not, as a people, seriously interested in the graver problems of life.

This same car full of people is illustrative of another feature of this civilization, namely, the dislike of solitude, the love of publicity. I had the audacity on one occasion to ask a certain editor how it was that people permitted his journal to print their names so continually. He looked at me as a cat might look if asked why the mice did not come out and share the rug before the fire with her. "I have hundreds of notes, some anonymous, some signed, sent me describing how this one

An editor on personalities.

or that participted in this or that festivity or was present at this or that function! I will not say that everybody is pleased to see his name in print, but most people are, and some people feel injured if their names are omitted when they think that they should have been inserted. There are men and women in this very city," he went on, "who, it is well known, send anonymously to the newspapers 'puffs' and gossip about themselves, or their friends or relatives whom they are endeavoring to boost up the social ladder."

The light of publicity.

This long funnel of a car contained many people who enjoyed this close proximity of strangers. Many of the hotels make no provision for privacy, and guests are expected to frequent the public rooms, and, be it said, the guests as a rule prefer this.

I have been in a small inn in Nebraska where we were all obliged to come from our rooms to perform our ablutions together downstairs.

The large summer hotels — of which

more later—offer hardly more privacy than bee-hives, and the parlors, piazzas, and dining-rooms are liked because there everybody is close to, and meets, everybody else.

Very many people here, I was surprised to find, although they can afford to live apart, in houses of their own, much prefer what is called "hotel-life" and live in hotels and boarding-houses, from choice. There is more life and go and change, one sees more people, one is left less to one's self, and many Americans, both men and women, prefer this.

An adventure at the White House.

I shall never forget on my former visit to America my adventure at the President's residence in Washington. I was taken there by a member of the federal Senate. We met in the hall downstairs a negress who was one of the servants. She asked me if I would like to see the President. Of course I said "yes." Whereupon I followed her upstairs, she knocked, then opened a door, and, to my horror, there I was intruding upon the President of the United States, without excuse or invitation.

I was not thrown out of the window, I was invited to be seated, and President Hayes and I had a chat, and there my esteemed friend, the senator, afterward found me. It may be that this particular President was peculiar in his domestic arrangements, but I could not help wondering how such intrusions could be looked upon as other than a bold-faced robbery of the peoples' time and energy, as represented in their chief magistrate.

I am told, however, that the people take offence at any official who attempts to seclude himself, or who puts up barriers between him and them. Just how, much-engaged public officers contrive to do their necessary work puzzled me somewhat. I suggested, perhaps impertinently, that every public official be enclosed in a transparent cell of some kind, so that he might at all times be open to inspection by the people without being interrupted by them.

"Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?"

When I returned to my own car after my sojourn in the other, I found a scene of great activity. A negro servant was performing a miracle. He lifted up the floor

African necromancy.

of the car, he pulled down the ceiling, and from obscure places he produced curtains, pillows and sheets, blankets and mattresses, and with great rapidity and dexterity he transformed the whole car into a series of curtained compartments.

He pulled aside my curtain with a grin, and lo! there was a bed, and above that another bed, and in the upper one an occupant, and, if you please, a woman! He apologized for this by saying that the car was very crowded, and in a conversation with him later I learned that, as a rule, it is intended that only men, or only women, should be put in layers behind the same pair of curtains.

However, to bed I went, undressing with some difficulty, and, though the air was close, I slept well. In the morning there was a scene of indescribable confusion. Men, women, and children, dishevelled and partly dressed, appeared at intervals from behind the curtains, making their way, some to one end, some to the other, of the car, where in a very small compartment one performed his ablutions. Every-

Democratic ablutions.

one was good-humored, and we brushed our hair and rinsed our mouths, and washed our hands in innocency, fraternity, and equality, and, be it said, with soap and water furnished to all alike by the railroad company.

As if by magic, under the manipulations of this negro prestidigitator, the floors and ceilings opened, the beds disappeared, and we were in our seats again. In some of the trains in which you travel for days and nights together on a long journey, there are libraries, pianos, smoking-rooms, barber-shops, and dining-cars, and let me not omit to mention type-writers—what a busy people they are, to be sure!

Presto! Change!

The emigrant trains have cars no better than the old fourth-class cars in Germany. People in the less luxurious carriages get out at the stations here and there and make a hasty meal.

I should much like to have the dissecting of one traveller who at one of these stopping-places, in seven minutes by my watch, ate two little bird-dishes full of raw oysters, four ham sandwiches, a large section of

pie, which looked as though it were stuffed with insects—mince pie, they call it—and drank one glass of beer and two bowls of *café au lait*, and then hurried to the train with two doughnuts and an apple—a doughnut is a braided mass of sweetened dough fried in lard. The Lord have mercy on his wife and children if they are his companions when he undertakes to digest these things! No wonder he was sallow and thin! No wonder the social aristocracy here is recruited in more than one instance from those enriched by the sale of patent medicines!

Doughnuts and dyspepsia.

XIV

The Black Belt

WERE it not for the fact that there is about one negro to every eight whites in the United States, the sleeping-cars might solve the race-problem here. The employment of negroes in this wise is assuredly well adapted to the negro, and grateful to the whites. The negro is singularly deft of hand, generally good-humored and obliging, and obsequious for a small sum in silver.

But my visits to Washington, Norfolk, and one or two other places in the South, showed me how grave is this problem here, of which we reck so little, and, indeed, hear so little, in Europe.

A few figures.

In the four States of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, the white population in 1870 was 2,319,152; in 1890 it had increased to 3,515,869.

In those same four States the negro population in 1870 was 1,865,447; in 1890 it had increased to 2,744,285. In the eight States of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and the four already mentioned, which together are called the "Black Belt," the white population is 5,658,517; the black population, 5,155,124, and at the past rate of increase the blacks will soon (if they do not now, the above figures being for 1890) outnumber the whites.

White and black population.

In the three States of Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina, the negroes already outnumber the whites by half a million.

But why, it may be asked, does this ever-increasing percentage of negroes constitute a menace to the political prosperity of this great democracy? For the same reason that so many other problems assume forbidding proportions, because here they are trying the experiment of being a democracy, without being a democracy.

These eight millions of slaves were freed, and then, as a political afterthought, the

suffrage was given to them, at a time when something like ninety per cent. of them were illiterate.

President Lincoln's view.

It was the great President Lincoln himself who said, only a year before the war between the North and South broke out: "I am not, and never have been, in favor of bringing about in any form the social and political equality of the white and black races. There is a physical difference, which forbids them from living together on terms of social and political equality. And, inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together, there must be a position of superior and inferior, and I, as much as any other man, am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the whites."

Common-sense, amounting to political genius, was the characteristic of this great American statesman, and in these few words just quoted is expressed what is practically the universal sentiment of thoughtful Americans on this subject. To give these people the right to vote was a mistake, and one that has cost, and proba-

bly will cost, the American people very dear.

There was undoubtedly much sectional feeling about the negroes as slaves, but there is none about the negro as an inferior. In Boston the negro is as much tabooed as he is in Norfolk. Almost fifty-seven per cent. of them are illiterate now, and even this, I was told, is very much under the real figure, for in some States they are required to read in order to vote, and they are all ambitious to be thought to be able to read, so that the statistician's work is peculiarly difficult.

Black and white criminals.

Of the total number of prisoners in the United States, 57,310 are whites, and 24,277 are negroes. In short, the blacks are as one to almost nine of the population, but as one to almost two of the criminals. Nor do these last figures take into account those of them who are summarily punished without process of law.

It might be supposed, from these few figures perhaps, that I am proposing to myself an arraignment of the negroes. On the contrary, I like the negroes, what

I saw of them in America. We Europeans have none of the antipathy to the negro so common here, quite as common in the North as in the South, let me add.

Their social standing.

A negro in one of the Northern States could no more gain admittance as a member to a first-class club, or as a guest in a first-class hotel, than to the dinner-table of a Southern planter. Equality in this as in other cases I have noted, is all very well as a theory, but in practice it is admitted to be absurd. In Virginia there are separate compartments even on the ferries for the blacks and the whites; and in many places they are not allowed to travel in the same cars with the whites, and be it not forgotten in this connection that the war closed some thirty years ago.

Men born when the war opened are now men of mature years, men who have known nothing of slavery, men who can have bitter feelings on this subject only by the attenuated thread of inheritance or tradition, and yet these men have even a less friendly, and a more contemptuous, feeling toward the negroes than their ancestors.

Pray remember that I am not giving these impressions from what I have heard from politicians, or from what was said, so to speak, *à mon intention*. No one knew of me as other than a Frenchman on a passing diplomatic errand, and I was not talked to, or talked at, as a man whom it was necessary to instruct or to influence. This printing of pages from my journal was no more in their thoughts than in mine, and this, instead of being a disadvantage, was a positive advantage; the only interest, if it have interest at all, of my journal being that I was merely a passing guest in America, and neither suspected, nor suspecting myself, of being a future critic.

Non-political sentiments.

Said a large planter to me as we were riding through his fields: "The great mistake they make in the North is in holding that they freed the negroes. They didn't free the negroes, they freed us!" He meant by that that he was no longer responsible as he had been before, and he spoke as though he were happier without the responsibility.

A practical view.

In clubs, hotels, and private houses I

kept repeating the question: "Do you regret the emancipation of the slaves?" The answer, without exceptions, was always the same hearty "No!" The only individuals who told me that they regretted the abolition of slavery were negroes. They are children in intellect and in morals, and many of them who had been slaves, and who are now free, would, no doubt, prefer to shift the responsibilities of life back on to a master's shoulders again.

Even in so large a city as Norfolk the negroes retain their old-time customs. They come to the houses as servants, but they go back to their own cabins and small houses to sleep at night, and they deem it one of their rights to carry home with them, each evening, a basketful of scraps and odds and ends from the kitchen; and often, it is hinted, they do not confine their pickings to mere odds and ends.

African ethics.

Small thefts, small lies, and living *en libre grâce* or *comme les oiseaux*, are not counted among them as sins, though their religious enthusiasm at their own meetings is more violent than anything I have ever

seen anywhere else in the world. A certain negress was much hurt when she was dismissed for stealing one of her mistress's gowns, after giving as an excuse that she wanted it to be baptized in! No doubt she considered the mistress as altogether lacking in piety of the right sort.

I trust that I have not said too much of the pleasures of eating and drinking in America, but it were surely a mere mockery of reality not to note the fried chicken, the waffles, the shad, the shad-roes (delicious morsels), the corn-bread, the reed-birds, the terrapin, the ducks (red-head and canvas-back), the broiled robbins, the smoked hams, the variety of hot cakes and rolls, the melons, peaches and strawberries of this, Brillat-Savarin's own country.

Southern hospitality.

Nor should I be content to let these pages go, without a word of the boundless and charming hospitality of my Southern hosts, and the friends of my hosts. I know little of their past errors and trials, but I have every reason to know that now they are most generous and courteous. One hears occasionally from some widowed and

childless matron a note of bitterness about the past, but who would not forgive her that?

There is far more bitterness of feeling between Frenchmen and Germans, and even between Frenchmen and Englishmen, than between the Southerners and the Northerners. There seems to be a gentlemanly feeling that "we had a good fight for it, and we were beaten; now let's say no more about it."

The carpet-bagger.

If I may be permitted to say a word in this rather delicate family controversy, it would be that the Northern politician of the small and conscienceless stripe has done more than anybody else since the war to keep up the irritation. He profits by a certain amount of sectional feeling, and, therefore, he does nothing to allay it. He knows as well as the Southerner that it is ruin to allow the negroes to exercise the suffrage uncontrolled—in several of the States just after the war it was actual ruin—and yet he harps upon the fact that the negro vote is not counted.

In the District of Columbia the negro

does not vote, and several Northern federal senators voted that the negro be disfranchised there, and no one of them dreams of wishing now that it were otherwise, it must be then a sign of hypocrisy to make so much of the fact that the negro vote is not counted in the South. It is not counted, it ought not to be counted, and to count it would mean bankruptcy and commercial prostration now, as was the case before. The mistake was made, and in the South they make the best practice they can of a bad theory, and to do anything else would only redound to their own and to the negroes' ruin.

Negro characteristics.

There are notable exceptions; but to this day the negroes are shiftless, careless, good-natured, and improvident. Their code of morals is entirely different from that of civilized whites, either in Europe or in America. Their facial angle is seventy degrees, that of the white man eighty-two; their morals are those of *les oiseaux*. San Domingo, Liberia, South Carolina, and Alabama—at the close of the war when negroes were in political control—are con-

clusive evidence of their inability to govern themselves; like ill-bred children, liberty has made some of them arrogant and inclined to push in where they are not wanted.

These facts being true, it is, so it seems to me at least, a matter upon which Southerners ought to be congratulated, and upon which all Americans ought to rejoice, that these millions of negroes in the South live in the midst of their white brethren in such security and peace.

Lynching.

The lynchings and burning of negroes, and other atrocious cruelties, are punishments meted out for unmentionable crimes. In London, Paris, and Berlin the law is one thing; in Texas, which covers about the same area as Europe, and in other Southern States, swift legal redress is next to impossible without a standing army of police.

Remember your own wives, sisters, and baby-girls; remember that you are not in Paris or Lyons or Marseilles, but in a thinly populated wilderness, and see if your eyes do not wander instinctively to

your gun-case or your pistol-drawer! Remember that these Southerners are Saxons and Huguenots one or two hundred years away from home, and in this, as in many other painful affairs of this life, perhaps *comprendre c'est pardonner.*

XV

Improvidence

IT is in the South more especially, but it applies to the country at large, that one is shocked by the wastefulness of the Americans.

At a certain house in Baltimore I was permitted to go into the kitchen. There must have been a dozen, perhaps twenty, negroes in these rooms below stairs. I asked my hostess if she found it necessary to have so many servants. "Oh, those are not all my servants," she replied, "but there are always a lot of hangers-on in the kitchen!" I could fancy the horror of my sister, of my mother, should such a sight greet their eyes on descending to their kitchen, but my hostess took it most good-humoredly, and answered the grins and the shining rows of white teeth, which

An illustration

greeted her in her own kitchen, with gracious words and kindly nods.

It is unfortunate that the majority of the house-servants in America are Irish and negroes, the two most wasteful and uneconomical races we know and of a different creed from their masters. It was told me by one of the oldest employees in the most famous restaurant in New York, that twenty years ago, before there were as many well-conducted restaurants and hotels as now, in their establishment, with French cooks and European servants, they saved so much that was thrown away by other American proprietors of similar places, that their profits upon waste alone enabled them for years to remain beyond rivalry. "We made dishes out of what our neighbors would have thrown away, and dishes, too, that people from all over the country came to this historical restaurant to eat." It was a Frenchman who told me that, and I believe him.

French economy.

Of course it was not possible very often to visit the kitchens and to discover what was thrown away in the houses of my

friends. But some of my hosts were so kind as to tell me the costs of their kitchens, their servants, their stables, and their wine-cellars. Butter at five francs a pound, fresh eggs at three francs a dozen, champagne at one hundred and seventy-five francs a dozen—and this not the best—servants at the ruinous wages I have mentioned elsewhere, rents in proportion, and, worse than all, careless, uninterested servants, who clear up after each meal by tossing everything that is left into the refuse-heap. *Cost of living.*

No wonder there are ever-increasing complaints that it costs too much to live here. No wonder thousands of American families have learnt the secret, and adopted the plan of going to Europe for a year, every now and then, to save money. *Europe profits.*

The country itself has been somewhat to blame for this lack of economy. Iron, gold, silver, copper, wheat-fields for the mere ploughing, thousands of square miles of grazing-land for the taking, fish, flesh, fowl, and fruit in bewildering profusion, millions of acres of good land still unoccu-

pied; no wonder such a wealthy mother, careless of her bounties, has made her children spendthrifts.

I have met Americans abroad who lived at the best hotels, who seemed to have plenty to spend, but who here, I found, have three servants and entertain not at all. They make money fast, then spend that, then make more, and so on.

Capital and income.

We old-fashioned Europeans like to feel that we are living on our incomes, not on our capital, but here in the fresh bewilderment of ever-increasing wealth they spend their capital; hence it is that many Americans in Europe give the impression of having more than they have. Not through any intention on their part, I fancy, to mislead, but merely because our standard of expenditure is the income from capital, while theirs is very often capital itself.

Then, too, the burden of expenditure is not placed here as it is in Europe. The European looks forward to his own house, his own stable, to servants and domestic comfort. The American, all too often,

saves on his home to spend outside of it. I mean by that, that there is to European eyes a disproportionate expenditure on the dress of the women and the children, on meals at restaurants, on theatre-going, on summer holidays, on general lavishness outside the home.

People who in France and England would have servants enough, who would entertain more in their homes, who would put aside each year for their children, who would rigidly restrict the outside expenditures, are represented here by family after family, in hotels and boarding-houses, people who travel in Europe, who spend each year about what they earn, who entertain seldom or never, and who do not know even what it means to be properly cared for by servants.

Mushroom growth.

You need travel only as far as Chicago to see a city which fifty years ago was merely a traders' post with a few log-huts, a city where a man-servant in the house, even now, is as rare as the egg of a great auk, and yet a city of enormous prosperity. I was driven about in Chicago on a

Luxury and untidiness.

coach with four horses, I visited two luxurious clubs, I saw miles of expensive houses, and I left cards at, at least, three houses where the door was opened by a slatternly woman-servant with her sleeves rolled up—perhaps I called at an unusual hour; I do not know as to that, none of us is infallible.

Immigrants.

We in France laugh a good deal at the overdressed women of the servant and lower middle class in England, but the Irish, Swedes, and Germans here appear in truly gorgeous raiment—seal-skin and velvet and silk and plumes and flowers I have seen repeatedly on them—and these good Americans pay them fabulous wages, receive in return the worst service in the world, and look surprised when you suggest that perhaps matters are a little upsidedown.

I have seen a German woman, scarce able to speak English, with three children, done up in velveteen and silks and sashes, who at home would not dare to appear with her family so clad for fear of the wholesale ridicule she would invite.

These immigrants soon grasp the failing of the Americans, and presume upon their

indifference and take advantage of their good-nature to an extent that simply dumfounds the European who has heard of how sharp, how shrewd, and calculating are the Americans.

Inebriation of prosperity.

I sometimes think that these people who have been rich for only two generations are just a little mad. Money and prosperity have come so fast, immense fortunes have been made so quickly, the change from the most meagre and curtailed life of the first quarter of this century to the oriental profusion of expenditure in the larger cities now, has turned their heads. They fancy that the perpetual spring of prosperity bubbles up in this great land, and that they need take no care for the morrow.

In the ten years, 1880-90, their debt decreased 25,763,931,500 francs, or at the rate of 2,500,000,000 francs a year.

In the aggregate of all expenditures, national, State, and local, the receipts for one year, lately, exceeded the expenditures by 3,112,973,950 francs. One must admit that such figures may make a people foolishly confident.

What does this occidental nabob care if servants rob him, laugh at him behind his back, and serve him ill! What does he care if his wife dresses far beyond her needs or her station! What does he care if in the drawing-rooms of New York one sees more jewels worn than in any of the palaces of Europe! What does he care if the poverty-stricken Irish, the needy Swedes, and Scandinavians, the penniless Italians, the cormorant Jews, the Poles and Hungarians, and the Chinese—until recently—flock here to fatten upon his wastefulness! What harm can he see in the nauseating frequency of the talk about what things cost, how much this one and that one has, by men and women, and even children!

Monte Cristo-like wealth.

Hogs and bullocks, in processions miles long, hurry through his slaughter-houses; his wheat-fields are measured, not by paltry acres but by square miles. He has a network of thousands of miles of mortgaged railroads, two hundred thousand millions of francs are invested here by Europeans whose eyes have been dazzled by these opportunities, his cities jump from a log-cabin to a

population of over a million in one short lifetime, a civil war costs him half a million sons or so, and thousands of millions of francs ; financial panics, anarchist revolutions, a band of Turks in Utah keeping harems by the grace of divine revelation, millions of francs stolen from State and city treasuries, these are nothing to him, for in spite of it all he puts aside 2,500,000,000 francs a year. No wonder he thinks that he can never be seriously ill, never be without plenty, and to spare.

Economy and parsimony.

Economy goes by the name of meanness here. When I see my dollars going as though they were francs, when I offer my poor *pour-boires*, when I say I cannot afford this or that, when I give my small parting gifts, a book or some other trifle, I feel that these people look upon me with pity, as lean and hungry, and, perhaps, as parsimonious.

But our vocabularies are different, as are our measurements and our expectations. Economy is not meanness with us, nor is carefulness deemed parsimony, nor is a competency expected to be wealth, nor is

lavishness supposed to be refinement, nor are material possessions mistaken for culture, nor fine feathers taken for fine birds.

It is all like a dream of fat kine to me, for I have been trained to economy, obliged to be careful, educated to feel that a gentleman should be master of his possessions, not merely paraded about the world upon them, like a monkey riding an elephant in a street-show.

Childish suspicions and childish remedies.

Nor am I in the least convinced, on sober second thought, that this country has found an Aladdin's lamp that will never go out. My quiet friend who has been so good to me in New York, tells me that money used to bring ten per cent.—that now it fetches only four or five. He tells me that this decrease in dividends is slowly making itself felt among the masses, and that they do not, or will not, understand that it is a universal economic law which is slowly closing its iron hand on America. He says also that there are signs of revolution about, murmurings of discontent on the part of the poor against the rich, in the air. The poor think, after

these years of seemingly unending prosperity, that the rich have stolen away the prosperity, and that to attack them is to get it back again. They are even now crying out for more money, more money, as though money could be turned out by machinery at Washington, the national capital; as though money were anything other than a simple sum in arithmetic, the multiplication of the fruits of the earth by labor. We know that money is only that, but they do not know it here, or will not admit it if they do!

It is little short of comical to hear and to read how these spendthrifts propose to print paper, and to call it money; or to stamp silver with an American eagle and the name of God, and call it money.

Responsibilities of wealth.

Alas! great wealth has its responsibilities and its lessons, whether the heir be an individual or a nation. Neither as individuals nor as a nation have they felt the responsibilities or learnt the lesson here. A Frenchman, an Englishman, or an Austrian, and even some Russians, feel that they must take care of money; in the case

of very many Americans, at any rate, they feel only one duty toward money, and that is to spend it.

French savings.

In France there is one savings bank account, averaging over five hundred francs, for every six men, women, and children. The total yearly deposits in these banks is in round numbers 1,000,000,000 francs. If we add to these the Postal savings banks as well, there is one account for every four and one half people in all France. Thousands of people in France look forward to an assured income of 5,000 to 10,000 francs per annum, and even less, as a happy outcome of years of steady toil. Pray, where is the American, even though his mother was an Irish peasant, or his father a Polish Jew, or a Swedish laborer, whose dream is to have only an income of $1,000 a year!

Contempt for a competency.

This is the heart of the trouble, the root of the discontent here. Their aims are too high, their expectations absurdly out of proportion. They are not satisfied with enough, they want too much, in order that they may waste some of it in the vul-

garities that are the fashion. By what law, human or divine, these people hope to have, all of them, more, each individual, than the individuals and families of other countries, I cannot understand. They have had more—that is readily explained by the opening up of a marvellous country—but in time things will right themselves, and a very little figuring will show the futility of supposing that 75,000,000 of people on one side of the Atlantic are all to have thousands, while a far larger number of people, more industrious and more economical, on the other side of the Atlantic, are only to have tens and twenties.

A hard lesson.

I thank God that I am not to be here, that my mother and my sister are not to be here, when these millions come face to face with the fact that they must learn to be economical, for that is the whole of the problem.

I foresee a mad war of races, interests, and classes when that time shall come, and sometimes I think it is not so very far off even now.

There are 8,000,000 negroes here, there

Some indigestible figures.

are about 1,750,000 people here who cannot speak English, the foreign-born population numbers over 9,000,000, and the illiterates over ten years of age number nearly 6,500,000, aggregating more than one-third of the total population.

This occidental nabob is undoubtedly a very vigorous man, but these figures show that he has some tough morsels to digest. If I were he I should take particular care of my health, no matter how well and strong I felt myself to be.

XVI

L'Enfant Terrible

ONE of the books given me to read before my first visit to America was a story by Mr. Henry James, entitled, I believe, "Daisy Miller." In it is a short account of an American boy, who, among other things, is made to say: "My pa is all-fired rich, you bet!" *A typical boy.*

I asked another American novelist, well known to all readers of English whom I met in New York, if the American boy was in the habit of making such vulgar speeches. "You are travelling about in America," said he, "take note of the behavior of American children in public and in private, and then tell me what you have decided about them. You come here with a fresh eye. What is indifferent to me is new and notable to you, and when you have been here three months you will know many

things that custom has made me too dull to discover."

I believe this is true, not only in regard to children, or any other one subject, but to most subjects. The passing stranger falls into many errors, but he hears and sees hundreds of details that the native has grown so accustomed to that they no longer attract his attention. Many men can sleep and eat and work with the din of the city streets in their ears, for they have grown deaf to them. The countryman who comes to the city hears each different noise, and for weeks can neither sleep nor work in comfort. It may well be that I exaggerate the impressions I chronicle here, but, at any rate, they are noises that I actually heard with my ears, and sights that I saw with my own eyes.

It is three months and more since I saw my friend, the American novelist, in New York, and when I see him I fancy that there will be a satiric twinkle in his eye when I broach the subject of the American child.

I have heard the Henry James incident, not once, but several times. I will give

only one example. The boy was perhaps twelve or fourteen years old. His parents were, to all appearance, rich. We were sitting on the deck of a steamer, and some remark was made about lifts in private houses. The boy was asked if there was one in his house. "No," was the reply, "but my popper [papa was intended] is rich enough to have one if he wanted to!"

Another Daisy Miller boy.

It is needless to give other verbatim reports of similar speeches from American children; suffice it to record the fact that this was by no means the only one I heard. Often I stood about and, without appearing to do so, I listened to the conversations of different groups of children—this is easy, often unavoidable in America—for the children are everywhere *en évidence*. They are in the railway-trains, in the tram-cars, in the hotel corridors, in the restaurants, at the theatres; they dine at night at the *table d'hôte* with their parents, they come down and order their own breakfasts in the hotel restaurant, and in some of the summer hotels they are like flies in, on, around, and into, everything. They talk back to,

Children, children everywhere.

contradict, and disobey their parents in the presence of strangers, and there is no amendment to the Constitution giving them special privileges, simply because they have these without irksome legal formalities.

Nor are these poor, or, according to American standards, ill-bred, children of whom I am writing. All the children whose manners and speeches I have noted down, belong to parents who could not possibly live as they do with less than an income of from thirty to sixty thousand francs a year. Hence they are children to whom the best sources of education and companionship are open.

Money values.

Americans, of whatever age, are very prone to tell you what things cost, because about many of the rarer possessions among this world's goods, that is the only accurate knowledge of them they have. But it is unspeakably shocking to hear this continual placing of a money value upon everything by children—"My sled cost so much, my pony, my shoes, my coat, my hat cost so much!" You hear it like a chorus from children everywhere. They tell one an-

other what this, that, and the other possession of theirs cost, and they boast of how rich are their respective parents.

They are irreverent and independent to a shocking degree. What I have never seen approached for barbaric heartlessness, I saw in New York City, when I actually saw some small boys throwing snowballs at a funeral procession.

It was quite needless to ask my novelist friend about American children after this experience. Pliny should have visited America before writing somewhat lugubriously of the children of his own time and country as follows: "How many are there who will give place to a man out of respect for his age and dignity? They are shrewd men already and know everything; they are in awe of nobody, but take themselves for their own example." Every word of this is true of these American children. It is no wonder that politics are as they are here, if the politicians are to be drawn from these young Saxon Bedouins. It is no wonder that, growing up as they do without discipline and without manners,

Pliny's dictum.

they cannot play their youthful games when at college against one another without the quarrels and accusations and *tu quoques* of the prize-ring and the pot-house.

Here again we see the theory of independence carried even into the realm of domestic life, and with what dire results. There is no such thing as the *patria potestas*, no recognition of authority, even by the children of a household to their natural head.

Patria potestas.

In some of the homes that I visited, it was only too apparent that "home" was merely a *façon de parler*. There was no unity of thought, speech, or action. Each one was a unit, even the youngest, and each had his friends, his opinions, his engagements, and even his affections, and each one was infallible. The timidity in asserting even lawful authority, and the contempt for it, which one sees in American politics, is learnt, I firmly believe, in these ill-regulated, or rather these unregulated, homes.

Indifference to authority.

Neither the unwritten law of affection of French home-life, nor the unwritten law of

allegiance to the head of the family of English home-life, obtains in American home-life. What is erroneously called indulgence of children by parents is nothing more nor less than neglect of children by parents — and here, of parents by their children.

In Europe we are prone to think, at least, that the spoiled child is an exception, but here the spoiled child is the rule rather than the exception, and a very disagreeable and inconvenient rule he is, too, to the stranger, though the native has evidently ceased to notice him. The American takes the American child, nuisance though he is, as he takes his thieving politicians, his Irish municipal rulers, and his tyrannous trusts and corporations, good-humoredly, and that, at least for the present, is the end of it. He does not bother his head about the future.

I have sometimes thought, while travelling in America, that this almost criminal negligence on every hand about the future, must be in some way related to the fact that they have no past here. Their con-

Past and future.

tinued prosperity for a hundred years has made them careless and thoughtless, and only some awful political or financial catastrophe will bring them to their senses.

A rich man can afford to be robbed for awhile, and he can afford to be carelessly lavish and optimistic for awhile, but not forever. This Rich Man of the Western hemisphere must take account of stock some day soon, must realize that the opportunity for vast and rapid accumulations of wealth, is not so frequent nor so easy as it once was, and that his own vigor is declining somewhat; and when that time comes, this chronicle which is read to-day as perhaps impertinent criticism, will be read then as prophecy.

This almost universal feeling about the future, that it will take care of itself, this universal hopefulness, so characteristic of the Americans, make the position of American children more comprehensible. The Americans are, as a people, political, social, and financial rainbow chasers. No matter what the past or the present, they see at the other end of the rainbow pros-

The child a symbol.

perity. The child naturally becomes the symbol of this. The child is all future. He is taken into account in this country, therefore, as a serious and privileged factor. He is pushed into prominence in public, and in private his impertinences are laughed at, and quoted, and he is a shrewd, irreverent, disobedient, and sophisticated mortal before he sheds his knickerbockers. The results do not belie, but support this assertion. The political and domestic disobedience and selfishness, which end in political misrule and domestic revolt, are more common here than elsewhere. The child is father to the "boss" and the divorcée.

The twig and the tree.

Young girls from fifteen to twenty conduct their flippant and passing flirtations unreproved and uninterrupted by parents. "I want Sallie to have the small reception-room to herself this afternoon. Mr. X. is coming to see her, and I want them let alone," was the remark of a well-known Boston lady to the friend in whose house her daughter was staying. The friend in question told me this, telling me at the

same time that "Sallie" was only sixteen.

"But who are these people?" I am asked. "You must have met queer people."

On the contrary, this lady and her daughters are known to, and received by, Boston's most exclusive social world.

It has not been my desire to look for, or to illustrate, my chronicle with odd and exceptional instances. If these things appear strange or doubtful to Americans, it is simply that they do not notice them. They may be seen by the casual guest in American homes in New York, in Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and Chicago. It is not that they are rare, these incidents; it is simply that they are of such constant occurrence that the native does not notice them.

In a house in New York in which I had the honor to stay for a couple of days, the two children, a boy of eight and a girl of twelve, took me about certain rooms and pointed out to me the various articles, pictures, and other things that "Pa has prom-

ised to leave me when he dies!" Thus are children early introduced to the serious affairs of life! *A dead man's shoes.*

Ah! but in spite of this sophistication, and this laxity of rule in the home, I am told, there is much less immorality here than in France, in Germany, or in England.

This statement reveals a curious superficiality of the American mind. Americans always speak of "immorality" as though there were but one kind of immorality, namely, that related to sex. But are not disobedience, treachery, foul play, political and commercial thieving and jockeying, corruption of officials and legislators, bribery, the levying of blackmail—are not these also immoral? If the laxity and carelessness in the home do not result in promiscuous social evils, they do lead to disregard of constituted authority—to an easy-going disregard of political and commercial crimes and misdemeanors, unequalled in any other country in the world. *"Immorality?"*

There are scores of political thieves and jobbers in New York, who, so it is said, are well known to have made comfortable fort-

unes out of the city treasury, and they are not only not shunned, but they are fêted and banqueted. So far as I can learn, a man may fail in business, and cheat his creditors almost once a year, and yet no social disgrace or legal penalty prevents his playing the game over and over again.

Puritanism and politics.

Said a prominent member of the Chamber of Commerce in New York to me: "It is a sad fact that a man well known to be a thief, and a giver and taker of bribes, may be elected to office in this country, while a man known to be absolutely above reproach, so far as financial and political integrity is concerned, may be defeated by any slander touching the purity of his life, even though he be a bachelor."

The politicians have played without ceasing upon this absurd and superficial moral code here. A thief is a good man, a man who is suspected even of licentiousness is a bad man. Was there ever a more absurd moral law than that? Either both are good or both are bad. But the American is nothing if not superficial where ethical distinctions are concerned.

Then, too, the American is not a sensualist as a rule, but he does crave wealth and notoriety with a mastering passion no one can measure, who has not seen it in operation on the spot. Hence the sensational press of the country revels in high-flown denunciation of all breaches of, or suspicions of, sexual laxity, but passes over, with slight attention, commercial trickery and political corruption, and even applauds them at times, if they prove successful.

The philosophy of it.

And the children read these dreadful public prints. It is one of their inalienable rights. I have seen scores of them poring over illustrated and spicy accounts of murder, divorce, rape, lynchings, burning of negroes for disgusting crimes, and the like. No wonder that at the age of twelve or fourteen they shock a poor, innocent Frenchman of forty-five by their familiarity with the ways of the world.

"You can't fool him much," said a fond father of one of these juvenile atrocities to me in a railway-carriage. "No," I was tempted to reply, "neither can you

further corrupt the corrupted nor further debauch the debauched imagination, but that is hardly a matter to be proud of!"

The other side of the shield.

But are there no lovely children in the States? Are there no young girls who flirt not, no young men who are respectful to their superiors, no politicians who steal not, no merchants of unquestioned integrity, no mothers who are pure and pious? Let me say at once that there are of all these many. Some of each class I have met. But I am painting a picture for one who cannot see details—a picture which is to give only outlines, only the preponderating colors—therefore I make no apologies for what I have written of the American child. Were all the children made into a composite photograph, that photograph would be that of *le plus terrible de tous les enfants terribles.*

It is written in the Talmud that "*Les enfants doivent être punis d'une main et caressés des deux.*" That is a wise saying, taken as a whole, but a fruitless injunction, if the one hand which punishes is forgotten.

XVII

"Society"

AFTER a visit to Boston and Chicago, and a trip to Washington and the South, on business affairs, I met my friend again in New York. He robbed himself of part of his own holiday, I fancy, to take me first to Saratoga and then to Newport, and from there I went alone to Bar Harbor, introduced by letters from him and others.

Newport.

Newport is like an enormous and brilliant garden in which are palatial homes. We have summer-resorts in and out of France, all over Europe, in fact, but no one place where the wealth and fashion of a nation focus themselves as here.

When an American family gets money enough to afford an attack upon the citadel of Society, they begin at Newport. Here congregate what are called "soci-

ety people," from New York especially, but from Washington, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago as well, and for two months in the summer the most highly polished American social kettle boils and bubbles and steams upon the Newport hob.

The social kettle.

Here again one notices how these people love to be close together. Some of the houses are, as I have said, without exaggeration, palaces, but they are not secluded country-seats; they are all near together, and one may stroll from one to the other in a few minutes' time. A club or casino where they play tennis, where they dance, and dine, and lounge is a meeting-place where, at certain hours in the day, and on certain occasions, people assemble to *flanner*, to flutter, to flirt, and to gossip.

Le monde où l'on s'amuse.

Society in America is not the society of power or even of prestige, but merely the society of intrigue and amusement. I mean, by that, that a man gains nothing of the serious victories of life, victories of commerce, of politics, of literary dignity, by being known as one of the few thousands

or so who give themselves to this side of life. Indeed, both politically and commercially, I am not sure that he would not lose by being conspicuous in this society.

The great game of life used to be, and is still, to some extent, played in the drawing-rooms in Paris, London, Berlin, Rome, and St. Petersburg. You meet there the diplomats, the politicians, the ecclesiastics, the distinguished or promising men of letters or of science, the conspicuous journalists and soldiers and sailors, the well-known travellers and explorers, and so on. One house represents one shade of political or ecclesiastical thought and action, and another another, and so on. Society is a microcosm of the world. Well introduced and well mannered, one may see in London, in a fortnight, the men and women who are making the wheels of their part of the world go round. At one house you meet one set, at one club another set, and so you may go the rounds.

Society's drag-net.

Society there drags the world for its biggest fishes, and you may see the political dolphin, or the exploring whale, or the

literary whitebait, all in white ties and black coats, in a beautiful, big, transparent, bowl which is called society.

It is worth while to be a part of this social life, and it becomes almost the most interesting portion of a stranger's visit to a strange land. I had a week of Newport, and a fast week, too. I met at least two hundred and more different men and women at dinners, dances, picnics, and on board a yacht or two, and I stayed part of my time in one, and part of my time in another, house. The kindness, the hospitality, the comfort, were lavish. No pleasanter people in the world to enjoy a week with, no kindlier hosts or more attentive hostesses. Your way is made smooth with gold. They even have to a certain extent good servants, and, as is true of this class of Americans in all the large cities, the best dinners in the world.

The absent ones.

But though I have legs and arms and a belly, I have also a head. Where were the statesmen, the soldiers, the men of letters, the men who are making America move, so to speak? One politician I met, a charm-

ing fellow, wealthy and wise, a man who takes his part in New York in State and city affairs, but he was the only one. The great majority of the men were idlers—very amiable ones, to be sure—but elections are won or lost, "strikes" are suppressed, bridges and railroads are built, treaties with other nations are made, new countries are discovered and settled, Indian riots and negro revolts are subdued, books are written, stocks are sent up or down, laws are made, not only without aid from them, but even without their knowledge.

Society has no "pull."

They tell good stories, some of them; they play games; they dance, dine, and drink; many of them are mere boys, but they are, so to speak, what the frothed cream on a pudding is to the cow that gives the milk, and Newport might be submerged in the sea, and the brains and daring and progressive energy of America would not be disturbed in the very least—a certain amount of money would be redistributed *et voila tout!*

I say this not harshly, but merely to mark a difference. For this same thing

could not be said of London, or Paris, or Vienna. The best society of Europe is success enjoying an idle hour or so; the best society here is idleness enjoying its success. One may go into society in Europe with a fair expectation of being stimulated, no matter what your own particular interests are; you go into society here and you are fortunate if, for any length of time, you are so much as diverted. In Europe they have had money so long that they are no longer amused by what mere money can do; here, apparently, society is still content with the juggling and transformations, with the luxury and the surprises, that gold can produce.

Le monde où l'on s'ennuie.

You do not meet the politicians, but the contributors to the purchase of them; you do not meet the travellers, journalists, statesmen, colonizers, and warriors, but merely those who talk about them. To that extent, at least, society, so-called, is a distinct disappointment. You hear much about this young woman's family wishing to marry her to that young man whose fortune still has the little card-board tags of

ready-made clothes and carpets upon it. You hear of that married woman's continued flirtation with this man, of this, that, and the other *ménage à trois;* you see, after you hear the stories, and know the names, these small insect-intrigues going on under your nose. You say this is no microcosm of this teeming, virile, turbulent American life. Surely not; it is merely the macrocosm of wealthy frivolity.

Society, to be permanently interesting, must be made up of idle professionals, not of professional idlers. Pray, bear in mind that Newport is not what I have dubbed American society; this is what the Americans themselves say is New York society's best dish, garnished with a little cold Boston celery, and a fringe of Philadelphia and Baltimore parsley. *Society's best dish.*

In this connection, clearness demands that one should note the American use of the word "society." According to the newspapers, practically every woman who attends a spelling-bee or who goes to the country for a short holiday in the summer is a "society leader." All the young men

who die in this country are "club-men," or "great club-men," as the case may be. For a long time this puzzled me, till I discovered that the newspapers intended to flatter, and probably, also, the relicts of the aforesaid deceased young men were actually flattered, by this term, "club-man." In Europe, of course, every man of any position has his club as much as he has his watch or his collar; and it would be as absurd to speak of a Paris dandy or of a London swell as a "club-man," as to speak of him as a man of trousers, or clean shirts, or polished boots.

"Club-man."

"Society."

Society, in Europe, has a certain restricted meaning which enables one to picture to himself what "in society" means. It is not necessarily a brilliant distinction, but it is, at least, a sufficiently intelligible definition. But here "society leader" and "club-man" may mean something or nothing, as the case may be. Here again democracy exaggerates the very sentiments and positions it is supposed to ignore.

Every woman with two changes of headgear is a "society woman," and every man

with a top-hat and two pairs of trousers is a "club-man." One hears, too, more talk about "old families" here than anywhere else; why it is I know not, unless it be because they secretly feel that they are all so new.

"Old family."

An old family means simply a family whose members have been, in one capacity or another, noteworthy and valuable citizens for a century or two; it means that, or merely that we are all equidistant from Adam, or, at various stages of development, from some anthropoid ape. In short it has a perfectly definite meaning, or it has none.

The foreigner is at first bewildered by this "society woman," "club-man," "old-family" talk, and then amused by it. There are clubs, and very good clubs, here; there is society, and very luxurious and bright society; and there are some noteworthy citizens whose grandfathers were not hanged; but there are seventy-five million people here also, and some few of them do not come under any of these three heads.

When I went to Saratoga, and to Bar

Harbor, I kept hearing everywhere of "society women," and "club-men," and "old families," but of society in the restricted and brilliant sense to which we confine the word I saw little outside of New York, Newport, and Washington.

Saratoga.

Saratoga is famous for its springs of mineral water, and for a certain kind of hotel-life during the summer, such as I have seen nowhere else in the world. Huge wooden structures, containing hundreds of rooms, are opened during eight or ten weeks in the summer, and there flock thither, to live like bees in a hive, some thousands of people with a certain amount of money to spend. They all eat together, dance together in the hotel parlors in the evening, lounge together on the hotel piazzas during the day, walk to and from the springs together, and if one could see through the partitions between the rooms as well as one can hear through them, the absolute absence of all personal privacy would be attained at last, and the crowd-loving American might look forward to life hereafter in one of these

Saratoga hotels. It is only, I suppose, a question of time when all partitions will be removed, and the acme of human promiscuity will be reached when rival hotel-keepers shall advertise "no partitions!"

My stay in Saratoga was short. My friend drove me about one day, spent the night, and then was off to New York. I stayed out another day and night, and followed him to the comparative loneliness and privacy of the crowded city streets. If Daudet or an equally caustic wit had been with me here, no doubt he would have said that Saratoga explained to him the Destruction of Jerusalem, for the Jews are here in swarms.

African chiefs.

The negro servants were to me the most interesting feature of the exhibit. To see one of these negro waiters in a white apron, a tin tray, covered with small bird-seed dishes, poised upon the upraised palm of his right hand, steering his way through the maze of chairs, tables, and other waiters down the long dining-room, was to see a rare sight. But to see the two or three upper-servants snapping their fin-

gers or moving about pompously, like black kings in an animated wax-work show, was to see the vanity of the peacock surpassed, as is the timidity of the field-mouse by the glories of Solomon. I wonder that the phrase "the glory of a negro head-waiter" has not become a current phrase in the American vocabulary.

These black servants, and the dress and ornamentation of the women, made one feel as though one were wandering about in a mammoth aviary, peopled by birds of paradise attended by Africans. Women walk about the streets in the evening, in evening dress and glittering with diamonds, and at the dances in the evening unintroduced strangers ask ladies to dance with them. No doubt, morally, everything is right enough; but this hap-hazard social life, even for a few weeks, must result in producing a dissipated habit of mind and a certain easy looseness of manners, which can hardly be good for either matrons or maids.

The American husband.

One often hears it said in America that American husbands are the best husbands

in the world, and from the stand-point of women this is quite true. It is a question, however, that only another century of American social and domestic history can answer whether this feminine social and domestic supremacy produces the happiest results. No one will deny that now, in America, the comfort of the man is subordinated to that of the woman.

Unlike most European countries, the men outnumber the women by something over a million and a half. This fact alone gives women a greater value here than elsewhere; and when one is told that there are over two million widows, or one widow to every fifteen of the female population, this of itself possibly accounts for a certain topsy-turviness of the conjugal relation.

What one would expect from this greater freedom and prominence of women holds good, for the divorces number seven procured by women to five procured by men. That is to say, of the total male population, 0.15 per cent. were divorced; of the total female population, 0.24 per cent. were divorced. Now, if it be true, as the Ameri-

can women themselves affirm, that the American husband is the best husband in the world, then the above divorce statistics certainly go to prove that there is something wrong with the domestic behavior of the American wife.

Domestic democracy impossible.

I offer no comment whatever as to that, because I am, I know very well, prejudiced beyond possibility of fairness in my belief that the man should be master in his house, and that if he is not so considered, it is equally bad for the wife, the children, and the man himself.

This hydra-headed monarchy that the Americans are pleased to call a democracy has not succeeded so well thus far that it is a wise move to make family rule hydra-headed as well—children, wife, and servants—all with an equal voice in the management, and each with a veto over his personal "wills" and "wonts."

My own ecclesiastical leanings make it difficult for me to approve of divorce, and yet I hope that I am fair enough to admit that in this country, where the ties of authority, either ecclesiastical or social, are so

newly knotted, it is not easy to damn anything off-hand. When, as has been the case, a high dignitary of the church procures a divorce for his daughter, and men and women of undoubted decency of life procure divorces, one must know more than do I of such matters, to speak *ex cathedrâ* on the subject.

An ingenious explanation.

One distinguished and affable judge, whom I met at dinner, told me that the American was naturally a domestic animal, and pointed to the large percentage of married people to substantiate his assertion, and followed this by saying that a large percentage of the divorces, he believed, resulted in a more stable and peaceful domestic life thereafter. He believed in permitting no chicanery in the divorce courts, but in permitting divorce for adultery, for wilful desertion, and certain other offences.

XVIII

Summer Resorts

IN most civilized countries, it has been well said, "*Les hommes font les lois, les femmes font les mœurs.*" After a round of New port, Saratoga, and Bar Harbor, one begins to question the truth of this epigram as applied to American laws and manners. If my observations are of any worth, the above statement is not altogether true here, where the women make the laws, and the men put up with the manners of the women.

An inapplicable epigram.

Laws and manners, both, are made at Bar Harbor, at any rate, for youngish men by young girls.

Picture to yourself a rocky island off the coast of Northeastern America; build for yourself upon it innumerable châteaux, small and large, of fantastic architecture, pour down sunshine upon it, and people it with hundreds of young people in bright-

colored summer costumes, and permit these vivacious youths to take all sorts of liberties with liberty, *et voilà* Bar Harbor.

The island was at first an outing-place for New Englanders; it became famous for its unconventional "good times," as they say here, and now it swarms with people from all parts of the States. Land sells for fabulous sums, the more fashionable world pours in, and dinners, and dances, luncheons, and picnics fill up the days and nights much as at Newport. The class of people here is distinctly different from that at Saratoga, but the ever-present American mixing process goes on here, only in a different guise—here it is *al fresco*. Young men and women are off together alone in canoes and sail-boats on the water, and in buckboards and "buggies" on the land. Women organize entertainments, invite the guests, and generally reign supreme.

Informality of intercourse.

One of the strangest political phenomena to me is the ceaseless agitation for women's rights here. Rights! *Mon Dieu!* they have rights, privileges, autocracy now in this country; pray, what more can they want?

I go to a luncheon, and thereafter I am escorted to a canoe by a maiden of twenty-odd summers, who keeps me out on the water with her till eight o'clock, laughs merrily when, in trepidation, I wonder what excuses I am to make to my dinner-hostess that evening. "Oh, tell her you were with me!"

I dine at the château of a Chicago lady, whose husband is not in evidence. He is deplorably vulgar, they tell me; but the wife is an energetic leader socially, and in other ways—*Ubi Claudius ibi Claudia* is the usual form, is it not? But here *ubi Claudia* and Claudius nowhere, seems to be the rule. In Europe the wife takes the social position of her husband, but here, God bless you! the husband merely fits in to the social exigencies of his wife as best he can.

Claudius?

I am having, as these young Americans say, "a simply lovely time," but, to be honest with you, I do not half like this new basis of social life. I do not see that it leads to anything strong, and true, and vigorous in the national life.

Among the lower animals the lion has

the mane, and the lioness is less noticeable than he; the male pheasant carries the gorgeous plumage, and his mate looks sombre beside him; the male Indian, both in the East and West, wears the jewels and the gorgeous robes and blankets; but in this last type of civilization the females strut and preen themselves in iridescent colors and in costly finery, and the male limps sedately behind her. The women drive, the women paddle and row and sail, the women invite you, the women entertain you. These women are never crossed, never made to obey, except when they have daughters of eighteen and over, and then these overwise young misses make a league with the down-trodden father, and the mother goes to the wall.

A new dispensation.

I hope that I am not exaggerating. I speak only of what I see with my own eyes. I give only the preponderating colors of the scene. There are exceptions. Pray, think not that I am such a prig as to give these fleeting glances as profound observations, as data not to be denied or modified. In spite of all that I write, it is only here,

not in prudish England, not in lethargic Germany, not in decorous and sleepy Holland, that I learned the falsity of my countryman's cynical dictum: "*Il est de bons mariages; il n'en est pas de délicieux.*"

I have seen in various parts of the world married people who respected one another, married people who loved one another, but here I have met at least a dozen married people of some years' standing who actually enjoy one another. After all that I have said which would seem to contradict this, I can only explain these *mariages délicieux* by referring them to the large category of bewildering surprises which this land supplies to the studious spectator.

A big word of praise.

It ought to be the case, that this untrammelled freedom of married and unmarried women should produce a good fellowship not to be found in countries where women are more carefully guarded; and where the women are of the best type here, this turns out to be the case. For most women the system is bad, but for a picked few it results in the happiest domestic establishments in the world.

Nothing is more productive of slavery than the gift of liberty. To give a man or woman liberty that he or she has not earned is merely to put him or her in worse bondage than before. One sees this here in the case of the negroes, in the case of the Irish politicians, in the case of the socialistic and anarchistic immigrants, who, severally and together, take the most impertinent liberties with liberty. I beg pardon in advance, but I permit myself to say that *this* applies as well to many of the women, and to almost all the children.

Fatal liberty.

One cannot conceive of an English Bar Harbor, of a French Saratoga, of an Austrian Manhattan Beach. People are not deemed fit for such freedom in those countries; and taking the results all together, massing them, so to phrase it, and leaving out the delicious exceptions, I doubt whether the Americans are worthy of such freedom. I saw at Saratoga and at Bar Harbor various things that led me to believe that many men and women overlook the difference between liberty and liberties. A slave to whom a crown is given, all too

often becomes a tyrant. Let the baby do as it pleases for a week, and see the natural instincts of humanity to wear the crown and wield the sceptre of an autocrat, crop out.

This is the land of spoiled children, and had I not come to know well here some such splendid types of what a woman should be, I should add, of spoiled women, as well. Perhaps it is true that the best types of men and women are more quickly developed and improved by those rarest gifts — wealth, power, liberty. These things are good for the best, but they are certainly bad for the average run of people, and an impartial view of this civilization proves the truth of this. Certainly, had I a young wife and daughters, I should not turn them out for the summer at Saratoga or Bar Harbor — unless I were an American husband, in which case I should do as I was bid and pay the bills!

A danger and an opportunity.

It must not be supposed, from this social and domestic prominence of the women here, that the men are a supine lot. They are subordinate to their women, but not

easily bullied by other men. They are not effeminate; it is simply the habit of the country. As in the far West, the Indian warrior of undoubted bravery, whose tepee is hung with scalps, may be beaten by his favorite squaw without loss of dignity or impeachment of his courage; so here, among the more civilized pale-faces, the men make no point of ruling in matters domestic.

Whoever has seen Hyde Park of a Sunday morning after church, or watched the crowds on their way to the races in Paris of a Sunday afternoon, knows without the telling that the men are as much *aux petits soins* about their toilet as the women. It is not so here. In New York, at Newport, in Washington, one meets many men who are always carefully groomed. But the average male American is almost slovenly in his dress, and the farther West you go the more this is apparent. A man, in many parts of the country, who is punctilious in his dress is looked at rather askance as one who devotes too much time and thought to the rather feminine details

Dress of the men.

of existence. This is carried to such an extent that many gentlemen even do not look fresh and neat.

In some parts of the country men pander to this for political effect, and wear shabby clothes, hats, and boots, and no neck-cloth — sometimes no collar — in the belief that this slovenliness endears them to the vote-holding masses. Many members of Congress have no evening clothes, and deem it foppery to wear such. One federal Senator was said never to wear socks ; another always wore a paper collar, fastened at the throat by a diamond button, but no neck-cloth ; and I could cite many more examples of similar savagery. Much of that, of course, is hypocrisy *pur et simple*, mere ochlocraticism.

Politics and neckwear.

In the case of the many carelessly dressed men in both the East and West, the matter is explained by the very high price of clothes when made by a tailor, and not bought ready-made, and to the fact that the servants are not trained here to look after one's wardrobe. In theory, this sounds all very democratic, to be one's

own valet, to look after one's own clothes and boots. I stayed in one house in Chicago, by the way, where a small box was pointed out to me as containing blacking and brushes, and with my own right hand, did I burnish up my boots—but as a matter of fact it is neither democratic nor economical. Subdivision and systematization of labor is the only true democratic, the only true economic, way.

At a club in Chicago, chatting of American affairs with an entertaining American, I broached the subject of prices. Like most Americans he launched out into a description of his own affairs. The suit of clothes he had on cost, he said, two hundred and seventy-five francs. He calculated that he spent about nineteen hundred francs a year just for coats, trousers, and waistcoats. His tailor, he said, would not make him an evening suit for less than four hundred and fifty francs. *A Chicago tailor.*

It was in the morning that we were chatting, and I was wearing a suit that I had had three years, and which cost me originally eighty-five francs. But then

good François keeps my clothes and boots as I keep my guns. Things for the different seasons are put away, and brought out again, and though I have probably five suits of clothes to that young gentleman's one, my clothes and François's wages added do not cost me per annum anything like the amount he spends for his.

For a young man to have a man-servant in this country is to be marked out as peculiarly foppish, as rather silly, as somewhat effeminate. But fancy the lost time, the lost energy, the worry of a really busy man who should attempt to be his own bootblack, to fold and brush and look after his own clothes, and calculate how much money he must waste through the lack of care bestowed on these things.

Personal service.

Personally I can see nothing derogatory to one's character in being another man's servant, if the other man is a good fellow. I supposed that in a democracy, at any rate, service was the only genuine badge of nobility. I should have enjoyed being valet to Alexander the Great, or Louis Quatorze, or groom of the chambers to

Lorenzo the Magnificent, or secretary to Talleyrand or Molière. What more interesting task than to serve a man who is playing a worthy part in the affairs of life? If one cannot do great things one's self, what can be nearer to it than to help take care of the man who can?

Effete philosophy.

It is this absurd and wholly undemocratic feeling about service in America which makes all the details of domestic and social, and even commercial and political life, so rough and hard and tiresome. It is one thing to be a slave, quite another to be a servant. In every civilized State the servants of God are given precedence, and, pray, who should come next in a Christian democracy, if not the servants of man, and then the servants of men?

The savage kills his own game, makes his own blanket, and bows, and arrows, and tent, each for himself. The civilized man has found it more simple to apportion to each a task, and thus leave each one free to devote his whole time to the doing of one thing well. In this way life is made more simple, less complex, and, in the true sense,

Elementary political economy.

more democratic. Who would counsel reverting to the system of each man his own cook, his own policeman, his own builder, his own tailor, his own shoemaker?

> "There is no office in this needful world
> But dignifies the doer, if done well,"

writes Fortunatus the Pessimist.

These Americans handicap themselves heavily by this semi-savage idea of theirs about service. Given six men, one who kills, one who cooks, one who builds, one who farms, one who makes clothes, one who makes shoes; and on the other hand six communities of one man each, where each one attempts to do all these duties himself, and who doubts which of these seven communities will be most prosperous and most powerful at the end of a year?

The practical side of it.

A statesman who looks upon statecraft as a serious business, and we Frenchmen know whether it is a serious business or not, has no time to chop up his own firewood, and to sew buttons on his own shirt, and to black his own boots. In many matters American men have kept pace with

the marvellous material progress of their own country, but in this matter of the systematization of the minor details of life they are leagues behind us, leagues behind Germany and England—formidable commercial competitors of theirs—leagues behind Japan, even.

They are far too self-confident to take any warning now. They deem these, matters that will right themselves, or problems that they will solve by machinery. But India, Russia, and South America grow wheat now, and borrow the best American machines for their labor!

Weakness of democracies.

Democracies have usually failed because they would not give their best men a chance, because they would not put confidence in natural leaders. Nothing the people distrust so much as the people. America has this lesson to learn. Another hundred years and they will be put to it here, despite their great natural advantages, to keep their place among the great nations. Only men, strong men, trained men, trusted men, can fight their battle for them. Machines will not do it. Luck will not do it. Only

trained men served by trained servants will do it.

But *allons donc!* I am preaching, *nous verrons ce que nous verrons!* But I like these brave people too much not to be serious in my discussion of their affairs from time to time. I fear that perhaps Bar Harbor and Saratoga and Newport made me feel a little school-mastery toward them, made me think they were not studious enough. I may be mistaken. There may be other surprises in store for me. Perhaps some American even now has an invention up his sleeve by means of which a man may carry a machine in his watch-case which will valet him and secretary him, and board and lodge him, all by touching a spring.

A possibility.

XIX

Impressions of Chicago

I HAD about finished putting my journal in order to send it to my friend in New York, when I received, forwarded by him to my address, an extraordinary letter from Chicago.

The letter ran about as follows: "My dear Monsieur X.: You will remember that we met in Chicago. My friend Y., of New York, tells me that you have consented to put some of your notes, taken while in America, in his hands for printing. If you say anything about the Windy City, you might mention my name, as you fellows say, just *en passant!*" Then there were several pages of personal flattery, and an offer to send me any facts I might want concerning the writer himself in particular, and about society in general in Chicago. This young gentleman surely deserves that

A Chicago "hustler."

I give his name here, but too many Americans have been kind to me to permit of my indulging malice toward even one of them knowingly.

I had not intended to describe Chicago, or Detroit, or Kansas City at any great length, though I paid short visits to all three. A casual tour about Chicago, with a Chicago gentleman and his wife, left a vague impression of slaughter-houses, cemeteries, parks, and lake-front. I was much impressed, too, by the strange combination of Pork and Plato there. My hostess attended twice a week a Plato club, and the winter before, so she told me, she had attended a similar class in Browning. Her husband, on the other hand, took me to see, as possibly the most interesting sight in the city, the slaughter-houses and stock-yards. I witnessed a procession of pigs becoming sausages at the rate of I have forgotten how many a minute. He laughed at her Plato, she laughed at his pigs. It seemed to me that the one was taken no more seriously than the other.

Plato.

Pork.

One-fifth of the total population of Illi-

nois is made up of Germans and Irish, and in Chicago itself more than two-thirds of the population is foreign-born. This state of things would seem to offer ample food for study and reflection to the more serious-minded citizens.

With a self-proclaimed anarchist as Governor of their State, and riots in Chicago only lately that required the federal troops to suppress them, one would imagine that the study of Plato and Browning, and the net-work of clubs for which the city is notorious, for investigating kindergarten methods, for promoting the rights of women, for the study of pre-Raphaelite art, for the study of the history of Fiction, for collecting funds for excavations in Greece, for the study of the pre-Shakespearian dramatists, and many more topics equally unrelated to the real problems of the city, were not to the point.

If Plato came to Chicago!

Be it said, to my shame, that never before at a dinner have I conversed with a lady on the subject of Plato. I believe Plato kept but a meagre place in his republic for women. It would, no doubt,

surprise him, as much as it surprised me, to visit this city, the name of which hitherto had been made familiar to me by seeing it on tins of meat, to find himself served up with the soup at his first dinner-party.

One charm, at least, about the intellectual life in America is its unexpectedness. People here in Chicago are not trammelled by centuries of training and precedent. We Europeans begin with the alphabet, go on to simple words of one syllable, then on from primer to reader, and begin our national classics with La Fontaine, and so on through a regularly graded intellectual training, step by step. But here in Chicago a lady, who talked glibly of Plato, surprised me by saying that she did not know an English poet named Peacock, and thought I was joking when I told her that his full name was Thomas Love Peacock.

A prophet not without honour.

The only sustained bit of English prose that has come out of Chicago, so my novelist friend told me, is a little book, half fiction, half reminiscence, of Italian life. I asked this same lady, therefore, if she had

read "The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani," and she had never heard of the book. Here is another illustration—alas! that there are so many—of the superficial, short-and-easy methods here. Culture! Yes, culture is the word they use.

I know men and women in France, in Russia, in Italy, who speak and read half a dozen languages, who have travelled over all Europe and much of the East, who know and have learned much from distinguished people all over the world, who have gone through the hard continental school and university training, and who do not dream that anyone thinks them men and women of pre-eminent culture. *Culture and Culture.*

But here, God bless you! these women who only just know how to write their notes of invitation and their letters properly, talk of culture! It reminds me of Boston, of Concord again, and of Plymouth, where, as here, the side-issues of life, the fringe, the beads, the ornaments of the intellectual life are worn tricked out on the cheap and shabby stuff of an utterly inadequate preliminary mental drill.

One scholar at least.

One young man I met here, a professor in the university, who turned out to be a distinguished Greek scholar and the editor of an erudite book on the American Constitution. I confided to him my impressions of the superficiality of much of this learning and reading and studying by short-and-easy methods, but he was too much the gentle scholar himself to chide others, though I learnt later that he has written of this flimsy pretentiousness of the intellectual life in unmeasured terms. All this study and reading are not bad; it is the choice of subjects and the assumption that when one has a little superficial knowledge of the great classics, one is therefore an equal of those who have endured the drill and training of years of academic life, which is mischievous.

These are a young people in a hurry, and they often mistake haste for swiftness. There is an intellectual ocean of difference between knowing things, and knowing about them. The chief value of knowledge is the training gained in its pursuit. The Chicago method consists in a kind of con-

viction of knowledge, akin to the mystic's conviction of righteousness, or the Calvinist's conviction of sin, and they are all three equally harmless and equally useless.

Chicago is the metropolis of the great middle West, an enormous territory of vast promise, and is now a city of a million inhabitants. As a witty gentleman in New York said to me, they have municipalized the prairies. It is a rough and raw civilization, and it is a fatal blunder to attempt to put fine French furniture-polish on rough boards before they have been planed and smoothed to receive it.

Purse and sow's ear.

It is said by anthropological students who have investigated the subject that certain barbarous races are weakened and finally exterminated by civilization. It is said, too, that minds accustomed to training and to study can bear training as minds of less cultured ancestry cannot. Sometimes I think that the enormous increase of wealth, of opportunity, of luxury, in such a community, say, as Chicago, have for the

moment weakened that fortunate growth of the men and women to whom they have come in the largest proportion.

The untamed American.

For reasons unnecessary to mention here, I was obliged to spend a day and two nights some hundreds of miles from Chicago, in a rough little village. I met there the genuine unwashed, unabashed, unaffected American in all his glory. At a certain so-called "grocery-store," whither I went in the evening to find a notary, I spent some two hours. During those two hours I heard some of the shrewdest talk I had heard during my entire stay in America.

A ray of hope.

These were types of what the politicians call "the plain people." I began to think that the politicians were right. I forgot Newport, I forgot Semitic Saratoga, I forgot Miss U. S. Liberty, embarrassing the finical foreigner at Bar Harbor, and I began to see the real backbone of this strange American life. I felt quite sure, when I left that expectorating group of natives sitting about the stove in that grocery-store, that no politician, no theorist,

no socialist, would deceive those men for any great length of time.

I had a similar experience, that I have not noted here, both in Salem and in New Bedford, towns in Massachusetts, and I remember now that I was much impressed then with the same shrewdness, and the same rugged integrity of manner and speech there.

Such men as these are much superior to relatively the same class in France, in England, or in Italy. So far as education is concerned, their speech and their allusions showed that they had little academic training; but they thought for themselves, and, what is better and more profitable, acted for themselves, and this had evidently given them an independence and sturdiness that will not be easily shaken. *Rough diamonds.*

I did my business in one case with a man who handled his pen much as a woman handles a gun, but who needed no lawyer at his side to protect him. He knew all about his own business, and a good deal besides, which it had been well for me had I known, too.

The plain people.

They tell me that the West is peopled with just such men—that the same is true of New England and the Middle States. They give little heed to passing discussions and fleeting theories, but when the real rub comes they appear at the front in startling numbers, with muskets or votes, as occasion requires. I by no means wish to imply that they are always right, but they are always in earnest; and when one has devoted much of his time to the gayer side of American life, this background of earnestness appeals to one as all the more important, and as a factor in this nation not to be overlooked.

If I were pioneering a party of foreign capitalists through this country, hoping to persuade them to leave their money here, I might take them to Newport, and perhaps to Boston, just to hear English properly spoken; but I should certainly take them to the seaboard towns of Massachusetts and Maine, and to the rough villages of the Western States, to let them see the real quality of the great bulk of the American people.

As for me, when I returned to Chicago from my visit to the prairies, it seemed to me that there was more chance for Chicago than I had thought, when I first saw that in this socialistic foreign population many of the people I met were pretending to be serious about Browning, Plato, and the pre-Raphaelite poets. *Hope for Chicago.*

Somehow *dilettanteism* in Chicago seems out of place. It is a little too much as though the coachman should turn round on the box to tell you what Ruskin says about sunsets, or the laundress turn from the tub to chat about the chemistry of soap-bubbles. Not that a coachman may not enjoy a sunset, and a laundress wonder about the iridescence of a soap-bubble, but for the time being their thoughts should be of other things.

Pork, not Plato, has made Chicago, and Chicago people have not arrived at a stage of civilization yet where they can with propriety or advantage change their allegiance.

One other feature of American life attracted my attention first in Chicago,

though I found that it was common in the clubs in all parts of America.

Amiability and potability.

We were sitting, some half a dozen of us, in the club, when another member appeared on the scene. He called a servant, said to him, "Take the orders!" and then turning to us all, said: "What'll ye have, gentlemen?" Thus this young man had his one drink, with his bill multiplied by six or seven. This practice is almost universal. It is done in New York as it is done here, and at Kansas City, and everywhere else I have been. "Take the orders!" and "What'll ye have?" might well be emblazoned on the club-crests like "*Ich dien*," or "*Non sans droict.*" They illustrate the hospitable tendency of the people, and the everywhere-prevailing dislike of solitariness.

It is of no consequence on these occasions that the inviter is not acquainted with the invitees. He includes them all in his generous embrace. He invites you to partake of potables first, and makes your acquaintance afterward. This custom leads to an unnecessary multiplication of pota-

tions, perhaps, but is an easy and gracious way of introducing one's self, or of re-introducing one's self to new-found company.

This cheerful, all-embracing "What'll ye have?" sounds in my ears now, when I am so many thousand miles away, and I smile involuntarily as I think of the happy-go-lucky, prosperous, and genial young heirs of a mighty nation's wealth, to all of whom I would gladly say, as so many of them have said to me: "What'll ye have?"

I did not get as far as the Pacific coast, and my journeys in this Western country were hastened by an unexpected order to return to Paris. But I am not sure that the communities in America with the least assumption of polish are not, after all, the most interesting, at any rate, to the European. There is a great difference between *newness* and *freshness*. The East seems a bit new, but the West is still fresh. The one has the awkwardness of the *novus homo*, the other the awkwardness of a sturdy but growing school-boy. The mistakes of the West are blunders of exuberance, the mistakes of the East are the blunders of self-

Newness and freshness.

repression. The one does not care at all, the other cares too much.

The Western cow-boy and the Western farmer seemed to me to be rather more genuine, as articles of American manufacture, than the haw-hawing Bostonian, or the New Yorker with his men-servants in knee-breeches. But here again I beg to apologize for generalizations. I know too many dandies whose minds and muscles are not what their neck-cloths and boots and gloves would seem to proclaim, to make off-hand comparisons between the "cow-puncher" and the "dude," as they call them here.

The cow-puncher and the dude.

During the late war between the North and the South, they tell me, the colleges sent as fair a proportion of good fighters as the lumber-camps; and the shops of New York and Boston as worthy representatives as the farms and the prairies. I am writing you of what I saw, of my personal impressions. An instantaneous photograph of a nation is no more a history or a prophecy than the photograph of an individual is an analysis of his character.

XX

American Newspapers

TO a greater extent than in any other country, the newspapers of America are read and talked about. Some of the most entertaining Americans one meets, or hears of, are journalists. It would be impossible to leave the country, after studying its journals as have I, without a few words concerning them.

One hears so much, and so often, of what education has done, and will do, for the masses in America, that one comes at last to ask himself, in just what, then, is this so-often-vaunted education to consist? First of all, the Americans refer you to their public schools. But even the best schools do not give a man an education, much less can these schools do so. Experience, reading, travel, intercourse with other men, and

daily employment of one's faculties, these are what educate a man, after the schools have given him the more mechanical instruments of education.

Newspaper education.

The Americans are such voracious readers of their own newspapers, that the newspapers must be taken into account as an important—not to say the chief—factor in what may be termed the secondary education of the mass of the people.

Last year 340,000 immigrants arrived in America; 270,000 of them were over fourteen years of age, and of these last, 78,000 could neither read nor write. The first printed matter that these people will read, when they can read at all, will be the newspapers. What they, and many, very many, other Americans read almost exclusively are the newspapers.

A French newspaper.

To a republican like me, interested to see what this greatest of republics is to become, the newspapers were a constant source of study, and, I may add, of amazement. A newspaper to a Frenchman is, first of all, a literary production, well-planned and properly balanced, and with

that as an instrument, it gives the news, and comments thereon.

Many American newspapers have no such aim. Most of them read as though they had no editor, and were the result of shovelling contributions into a hat, without a head in it, to be taken out and printed in such order and sequence as chance may dictate. There are, of course, exceptions to this. One prominent daily newspaper, published every morning in New York, which shall be nameless, is edited, edited in fact better than any other sheet of the kind in the country, and as one glances over it, the logical mind is satisfied with its evident sense of proportion, and its terse expressions and clear English. Whether one admires its tone always or not, there is daily evidence that there are brains in the editorial rooms, while many other newspapers give evidence only of a plentiful supply of mud in those quarters.

A firstrate newspaper.

It would be a colossal task to enumerate and to criticise, with any care, even the leading American newspapers. Instead of that, and out of regard to the dangers of

prejudice and partiality, I have chosen eight newspapers from different parts of the country, and carefully summarized their contents.

The majority of these newspapers have from six to eight columns on a page, and the columns are from seventeen to twenty-one inches in length. A newspaper with twelve pages of seven columns each, and each column twenty inches in length, would have about 1,680 inches of printed matter. With a measuring-tape I mapped out these eight newspapers, with the results as shown in the table. The synopsis of the matter is, of necessity, very general, and no doubt here and there mistakes were made in putting such and such matter under this or the other heading. Wherever there was any doubt in my own mind as to whether a topic came under the head of news or gossip, to the newspaper was given the benefit of the doubt, so that if there are errors they are in favor of the newspaper. In choosing the three New York papers for this table I was guided by an eminent lawyer of New York, who gave me what he

A synopsis.

Analysis of the Contents of Eight Daily Newspapers.	New York *Evening Post.*	Paris *Figaro.*	Chicago *Tribune.*	New Orleans *Daily Picayune.*	New York *Times.*	Minneapolis *Tribune.*	New York *World.*	Kansas City *Times.*
Editorial Matter	105*	93	79	112	88	75	71	55
Correspondence, Special Articles	210	117	19	58	49	6	27	...
Domestic, Local News, Politics	261	113	118	112	113	40	135	56
Gossip, Personalities	31	40	304 ‖	76	61	50	72	60
Advertisements	340	108	397	408	486	861	767	541
Quotations from Newspapers	155†	15	97	17	93	20	22	20
Accident, Crime, Fire, Failures	135‡	...	119	57	156	164	493 ¶	156
Court and Legal News	160	36	150	30	111	37	5	134
Commercial and Financial	340	81	167	314	407	179	61	167
Drama, Music	32	43	8	22	74	3	19	8
Sport	71	32	121	99	11	92	124	71
Humor, Jokes	7	12	17	7	7	23	9	2
Religious, Charities	56	...	...	52	36	12	...	15
Marriages, Deaths, Births	10	10	8	23	49	13	64	28
Weather	6	3	104	38	11	40	12	23
Social Matters, Fashions	...	14	184	103	54	61	...	114
Literature	13	42 §	55 §	...	...	55 §	...	33
Illustrations	...	...	90	3	...	...	298	11
Cuba	...	...	89	216	...	57	47	3
Total	1,932	759	2,126	1,747	1,806	1,788	2,226	1,497

* Forty-nine directly personal and somewhat abusive.

† One hundred and twenty-one from British newspapers. ‡ Nothing sensational. § Fiction.

‖ Some of this is literary gossip. ¶ All highly colored.

considered one good, one bad, and one indifferent, example, my own choice being subordinated to his. In adding the Paris *Figaro* to the list, I offer a comparison of orderliness, economy, and succinctness, as we know them in France.

A Parisian likes his newspaper to read itself as he turns its pages; the American is willing to delve, and seek, and flounder, in order to get the little that one really cares to know from day to day. The newspaper is primarily to make and to keep a man at home in the world, with as little cost of time and labor, as may be, to himself.

Lack of precision.

The average American newspaper has no such aim in view. It flounders about in crime, gossip, accidents, sensations, personalities, fiction, pictures, and news, apparently unable to decide just what it wants to do. One of the eight newspapers, on the particular day on which I tabulated its contents for this purpose, devoted almost one-twelfth of its total contents to the weather; another gave considerably more than one-half of its total contents to crime, advertisements, sport, and personal gossip;

another gave one-half of its columns to advertisements; another was all too evidently wavering between the sensationalism of one extreme, and the decency and orderliness of its evening contemporary in the same city. In all but one of them, practically everything was padded to a grotesque extent, with the evident intention of giving their readers the impression of a wealth of news for their money. *Padding.*

The newspapers included in this table were chosen quite at random so far as date is concerned, and no attempt was made to point a moral or to adorn a tale, by choosing an issue of any one of them which should illustrate any particular point. There they are, just as they might appear on any given day to a stranger looking them over at an hotel or a club.

The first thing one notices about them is their utter disregard of proportion as compared with the *Figaro*, for example. It is surely impossible that on any given day in New York, accidents, crime, fire, and business failures should be, omitting the advertisements, one-third of all the

news and comment, as appeared to be the case according to one of these newspapers; or that the weather could possibly offer such a fund for comment as to swallow up one twentieth of a large morning paper; or that society in Chicago should suddenly become, in point of interest, one-twentieth of all the known world reached by telegraph.

Were I to make these statements off book, the critic would appear, as is so often the case, with his "foreign exaggeration," "absurd generalizations from rare incidents," and so on, but, fortunately, the table is here, and from it each one may deduce his own conclusions. My own conclusion is that unless one happens upon such newspapers as the *Post*, the *Sun*, the *Tribune*, in New York, for example, he would be led to believe that the population consisted of thugs, fire-bugs, and bankrupts, who, for some unaccountable reason, spent large sums on advertising.

A salient trait.

Here again we touch upon that peculiar American trait of itching to be busy, coupled with a disinclination to think hard about anything. Far too much is

done, far too little is thought out. The newspapers mirror accurately enough, most of them, this state of mind. One can almost see the editor of one of these newspapers "fearfully busy," with no time to think—the last thing he cares to do, or is capable of doing probably—surrounded by telephones, type-writers, office-bells, and stenographers, fearful lest a rival should get a murder, a fire, a prize-fight, or a personal scandal that he wants; padding news that he promptly contradicts the next day, and pouring forth irrelevant, inaccurate, and unwholesome printed matter upon a constituency of readers whom he has taught to be sceptical, frivolous, and eager for another sensation. Ruin stares him in the face if his readers are allowed to think or to study, and he does everything in his power to so occupy their minds that they may do neither.

"Being busy" again.

It is sometimes said, by the ignorant, that the Catholic Church aims to keep its people in ignorance that thus they may be the more readily ruled. This is certainly and obviously true of certain newspapers of

large circulation in America. Their public must necessarily be people of untrained minds, and thus they are doing an awful injury to the State in retarding the development of that only possible safeguard of a republic—an educated suffrage.

It would be as impossible to a university-trained man to read continuously certain of these newspapers, as to interest himself at leisure moments, with his baby's blocks or nursery rhymes. And yet to a large extent the better class of people must help to support these newspapers, since, as a rule, they are the moneyed class. They advertise in them, and to some extent subscribe for them; for the mere buying of a newspaper for a penny, by even an enormous number of people, will not make its proprietors very rich.

Who buys them.

I would not dare, as an outsider, to set down here the contemptuous things that are said about the worst of these newspapers and their proprietors by practically every respectable American one meets. But good-humor and carelessness prevail in the

end, and no one cares to take the step beyond denunciation.

Trained, travelled, and capable men are not so numerous in America as in France, England, and Germany. Those who have these qualifications are either making money in other affairs, or they are—a small number of them—idlers, what the newspapers call "club-men!" It was well known in Europe that Lord Salisbury, now England's Prime Minister, contributed regularly in years gone by to the *Saturday Review*, anonymously of course. Should he have presented himself to an American editor as a candidate for his staff, not one in ten of them would have known enough to make any use of him, unless it were to advertise the fact that "Salisbury now hangs up his coronet and his peer's robes on the back of our office-door!" Many of these Fire-Failure-Prize-fight newspapers do not want, and have no place for, such articles as the man who was to become England's Prime Minister could write. They do not want men who can stop and think, they want men who

An editor's staff.

can run and jump; and the dirtier the puddle they land in, the better.

Such a man as M. de Pressensé, or such an one as Sir Charles Dilke, one of the greatest living authorities on extra-England subjects, might wait in vain for a place on the staff of an American newspaper. The American editor wants something that will sell to-morrow morning, and not something that will be true to-morrow, and for a year of to-morrows. The large majority of Americans do not know good English from bad — though they have a keen appreciation of smart writing—hence a trained and clever craftsman with the pen is of no more value than the average reporter, and would probably cost more.

The fact that domestic politics is managed and directed, not by the people, but by professional politicians, makes it unnecessary—futile when they do—for the mass of the people to learn even about their own political questions from their newspapers. So far as foreign politics are concerned, the mass of Americans take little interest in them, and give little heed to

Foreign news.

what is written on such subjects. Hence the newspapers are not looked to for teaching of a direct and valuable kind, as they are in other countries.

"What is going on," is a familiar heading in many newspapers, and to tell this luridly or decently, and no matter how inaccurately, is the sole aim of many of them. In an empire or a monarchy it is not, perhaps, necessary that the people should be students, but in a republic it is the prime necessity. To study and to learn requires training, and you cannot train on absinthe or cocktails.

The lower-class newspapers accustom the people to such highly seasoned fare that the plain diet of honest thought becomes distasteful to them. These newspapers, therefore, are themselves not only not teaching anything good, but they are making it more and more difficult for anyone else to do any teaching that shall be of practical value. The repeated failure to make a weekly paper, say like the London *Spectator*, a success here, and the difficulty of making even a sound daily newspaper a paying

Dangerous diet.

venture, bear witness to the debauchery of the reading public by the sensational press.

On the other hand, the Americans have an illustrated weekly paper, called, I believe, *Harper's Weekly*, which is far superior to anything of the kind in Europe, and their beautifully illustrated monthly magazines have no rivals even, anywhere in the world. These, however, do not depend for their popularity upon any one city, or upon any one section of the country, but are subscribed for, and read, by the better classes all over the country. In this connection it is fair to say, too, that my own favorable conclusions in regard to such newspapers as the *Sun*, the *Post*, and the *Tribune*, in New York, and others elsewhere, are but echoes of the respectable opinion there.

First rate journalism.

I plume myself, not upon having made any journalistic discoveries, but upon having used a European measure upon American newspapers, only to find that its records tally with what Americans, who are best able to judge, say themselves.

Nothing is more difficult for a traveller

than to say what is good, and what is evil, in a stranger nation. But, the world over, it is believed, to put the matter broadly, that courage is virtue, and cowardice is vice. Trace back the pedigree of any virtue, and its first ancestor was courage. Trace back the pedigree of any vice, and its first ancestor was cowardice. Then we must all admit—Frenchmen, Americans, Englishmen, and Italians, alike—that stabbing men and women in the back; hurling anonymous insults at them—one Western newspaper calls the President of the United States a wife-beater — publishing persistently misleading news; prying into the private affairs of private families; publishing stolen photographs of women and children; listening to, and circulating, character-destroying stories without troubling to investigate or to hear the other side; devoting a responsible position to the exploitation of crime, scandal, and unverified rumors is cowardly, and, therefore, unworthy of a gentleman.

The ethics of it.

If American newspapers are in the habit of doing any or all of these things, we can

all agree that they are bad, without going into ethical details, that lend themselves to discussion and argument. That some of these newspapers, and their proprietors and editors, do devote themselves to the printing of such matter, no one here denies.

The strange code of morals of these people is thus brought more than ever into prominence. You may sit at dinner near a man who, a few hours before, saw the proof of an article reciting the nasty details of a social scandal, and who ordered it printed; while if this same man told the same story at his club, steps would be taken to bring about his resignation. The farther you travel into the interior, the more the people look upon their newspapers as privileged social and moral Juggernaut cars, to which there is nothing to do but to kneel for crushing.

A suggestion.

They are an ingenious people, these Americans. It will not be long before there is an American Association for Protection against the Newspapers. Members of the association will pay so much each year, and the association will undertake in return,

with eminent lawyers for counsel and large wealth behind it, to protect its members from anonymous attack of a malicious or meddlesome kind. Then will cease that most incomprehensible and vulgar feature of American life, to the stranger, namely, the daily publication of private and personal details of home and social life.

No doubt many Americans love to see their names in print, but they are usually those who deserve no such attention, and as for those who do not, life is sometimes made intolerable for them.

A commercial view.

Even from the low commercial standpoint, it is estimated that many millions of the much-striven-for dollars are now expended in Europe by Americans, who frankly tell you that they have been hounded out of the country by the newspapers. They have committed no graver fault than to be the possessors of large wealth, but the newspapers made privacy impossible to them, their children, or even their servants, and what money could not buy here, they have gone to Europe to buy in peace there.

Surely the wide-awake Yankee shopkeeper will begin to see, ere long, that this class of newspaper proprietor is making more money for himself than he is making for them. Driving away the rich in order to feed the poor on sensations is, to be sure, a form of philanthropy, but in a commercial country it is a form of charity that not only begins, but stays, at home, in a few newspaper offices.

This freedom of the press has its advantages, perhaps, in one particular respect, and that is, the general confidence on the part of the public that their newspapers are not, as a rule, bribed for financial or mercantile purposes; though no doubt the weaker provincial newspapers are regularly subsidized by one side or the other in every great political campaign. Sometimes, when great questions of financial or economic policy are at stake, enormous sums are spent in this way, the party which does the subsidizing, of course, holding that such expenditure is a legitimate education of the people.

The buying of newspapers.

In conclusion, one may say that at least

the American newspaper tries hard to be entertaining and interesting, and often succeeds. So far as many of their editors and contributors are concerned, I ought to be, and certainly shall be, always hereafter the first to maintain that they are not only interesting and entertaining, but delightfully hospitable, as well. Be it said that this is true of many other departments of American life. The men are better than their work. Travellers who meet and know Americans, are, as a rule, confident of the final outcome of American institutions. Those who judge of America by American work alone, or by American diplomacy, or by Americans idling in Europe, are more prone to pessimism.

The men themselves.

XXI

Conclusion

IT is no easy matter to sum up one's impressions of a nation of seventy millions of people scattered over a country extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. There are so many different nationalities, so many different climates, so many different interests, that one finds statements of facts for one section, and one class, and one climate, are no longer fair statements if applied to another section, another climate, another class. While there is social snobbery in New York, and intellectual snobbery in Boston, and painful superficiality in Chicago, there is nothing of the kind in Bloody Gulch, or Davenport, or New Orleans, or Galveston.

Finally, brethren!

This very diversity makes the country interesting to the traveller who goes from

place to place merely to see or to hear some new thing, but, contrariwise, makes each particular locality seem monotonous and provincial to the European accustomed to have all climates, all classes, all interests centred in some one capital.

Paris, Berlin, London, Rome, Buda-Pesth, offer a far greater variety, both intellectual and material, than any one city in America; and yet, if one travels about in America, one finds a little of London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, and even Buda-Pesth tucked away in one corner or another of this huge country.

Everything that one says may be true, and still everything may be contradicted by the righteous wrath of some community where such and such a state of things does not exist. If a certain condition of social affairs exists in New York, and the traveller deems that American, the citizen of Davenport bears witness that it does not exist there, and therefore accuses the traveller of knowing nothing of America. *What is American?*

Lynching is American in South Carolina, but it is not American in Boston—at least

not since 1860 or thereabouts; to go to dinner, or to the theatre, with one's back and bosom bare, is American in New York, but such a display in Davenport would render the offender liable to arrest, or, at any rate, certain of social condemnation; to babble of Stendhal, and Rossetti, and Browning is American in Chicago, while it would be simple lunacy in Bloody Gulch; to have a tub and a clean shirt and collar, to shave, and to dress for dinner every day, is American in Washington, and excites no remark, but to do those same things in Valentine, Nebraska, would not only excite remark, but probably social persecution; to have a valet, and to wear polished shoes, and to brush one's hair till it glistens, and to drive a tandem, is not only American, but commonplace enough in New York, while in Sioux City such behavior would be considered not only un-American, but anti-American; to wear knickerbockers, parti-colored stockings, and a plaid waistcoat excites no comment in the country about New York, but in Topeka an apparition of that kind would assemble a crowd,

Different customs.

and perhaps necessitate calling in the police.

No wonder, then, that the Duc de Liancourt, and De Tocqueville, and Savarin, among my own countrymen, and Mrs. Trollope, and Dickens, Lady Stuart Wortley, Richard Cobden, Frederika Bremer, Arnold, W. H. Russell, and other visitors from "abroad" to America, have called down upon their heads sneers, denunciation, and abuse. No doubt they all told the truth about what they saw, and told it amiably, and with the best intent in the world; but this is the land of contradictions, and it is an easy task for the native critic to pander to his sensitive fellow-citizens by showing only one side or the other of the picture as his case for the defendant requires. *Foreign travellers.*

It is evident then that I cannot, in good faith, offer apologies for mistakes to Mr. Smith, in Davenport, and to Mr. Jones, in Bloody Gulch, when to Mr. Knickerbocker, in New York, and to Mr. Mayflower, in Boston, they are not mistakes at all; or to Mr. Knickerbocker and to Mr. *Difficult to apologize.*

Mayflower for mistakes which to Mr. Smith and to Mr. Jones are not mistakes. I must take my chance with other visitors to America, should American critics deem my friendly and fraternal chronicle worthy of their notice at all.

A summary.

If I were asked to outline in a few paragraphs the fundamental differences between this new civilization and the older civilizations of Europe, I should phrase the matter as follows: First, there is a strange exclusion of the more cultivated classes from even a proportionate share of authority and responsibility in the governing machinery. The best men do not rule in domestic, nor guide in foreign, politics. They may do so indirectly, but they do not appear directly. This condition of affairs explains the rather happy-go-lucky political methods in vogue, and at the same time explains the fact that social life,—the polite world,—strikes the foreigner as being so unreal, so ineffective, so monotonous, so detached from great issues.

In the old Greek world a man was only a citizen when he was a politician; to the

foreigner this democracy seems to require for stability, that every gentleman should be a politician, and every politician a gentleman, but no honest traveller can say that such is the actual situation.

Discontent as a philosophy.

Second, there is undoubtedly social discontent in this new country, as there is in Europe. In Europe, however, this discontent poses at least as a philosophy, in some places even as a religion, and dignifies its vagaries under the various sub-titles of socialism. Here the social discontent is, mainly, outspoken and vulgar jealousy. The result is what I have noted elsewhere, the fact that classes are farther apart, less in touch with one another here, than in Europe. This seems at first sight improbable, till one remembers that good-fellowship and even friendship may exist in spite of conflicting opinions, but never in spite of distrust and jealousy, particularly jealousy of this sordid kind.

This aloofness on the part of the polite and the cultured, and this undisguised and untempered jealousy on the part of the less fortunate classes, are salient characteristics

of the life here, life, that is, as it would be looked at from the point of view of the foreign student. All the details, anecdotes, illustrations, and comments in the foregoing pages may be traced more or less directly to these larger considerations just named.

I like America and the Americans so much; they have been so hospitable, so generous, and so friendly to me; their country is so evidently prosperous, I cannot fancy that in these journal pages I have passed criticisms unworthy of them or of me. If I have done that, then I beg here and now to apologize; certainly that is a mistake, not only as against New York but as against Bloody Gulch, not only as against New Orleans but as against the most northern community in Oregon.

An apology in advance.

Of the one triumph most desired, I cannot, in any event, whether critics be kind or harsh, be deprived. The lady for whom the journal was first undertaken enjoyed reading the manuscript, and thought the Americans must be a "curious and interesting people;"—she may, alas, have

read it hastily—none the less my task and the impression that I wished on the whole to produce were both accepted as they were meant. Hence:

> "All is well ended, if this suit be won,
> That you express content."

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